Delaware Issues Guidance To Help U-Pick Farms Open For The Season

DOVER, Del. – The Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) issued guidance today to help local U-Pick farms safely open to the public for the season. This guidance will help farm staff and visitors to U-Pick farm operations participate in a safe manner to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

"Each year when fresh Delaware grown strawberries come into season, many of our family farms begin to open their U-Pick operations to the public. These farms provide residents an opportunity to actively connect with where their food is grown," said Secretary of Agriculture Michael T. Scuse. "With the public's concern about finding food during the COVID-19 pandemic, we believe farms will see increased U-Pick participation as households look to freeze, can, and put up food to enjoy the rest of the year."

Late spring through the fall is a time when Delaware's U-Pick farm operations open to allow residents and visitors to pick their own strawberries, blueberries, peaches, apples, pumpkins, live Christmas trees and more. DDA recommends that residents call ahead to their local farm to confirm that they are offering U-Pick this season and to set up an appointment to go to the farm. Each farm needs to confirm there is adequate space in the field for social distancing at any given time.

All customers 13 years and older are required to wear face coverings or they will be denied entry. Face coverings are recommended for children ages 2-12 visiting the farm with their families. Anyone coming to the farm to pick produce will be required to sanitize their hands before and after going into the field. Picking containers from home will not be permitted.

If you are sick with any of the following symptoms, stay home: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle fatigue, chills, shaking with chills, loss of smell or taste. Other symptoms such as headache or digestive symptoms (vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or lack of appetite) are potential symptoms related to COVID-19 and may prompt further screening, action or investigation.

If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or have symptoms of illness, you may not go out in public. Older adults and people of any age with serious underlying medical conditions – including serious heart conditions, chronic lung conditions, including moderate to severe asthma, severe obesity and those who are immunocompromised, including through cancer treatment – may have a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. We want to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 within our community, so if you are sick or have been exposed or are at higher risk for severe illness – stay home, do not go visit U-Pick farm.

More information regarding the guidance for Delaware U-Pick farm operations during COVID-19 can be found at https://de.gov/buylocal.

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