

March 25, 2020

U.S. Department of Agriculture Operations Allowed to Operate During Shelter in Residence

1. Many cities and states have directed that individuals shelter at their place of residence except that they may leave to provide or receive certain essential services or engage in certain essential services and work for essential business and government services.

2. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that the following functions are performing an essential government service or activity, both of which qualify under exemptions, or preempt any conflicting city or state provision, thus providing a basis for exemption from the shelter in place requirement and supporting critical federal infrastructure sectors as defined by the Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency via a Memorandum titled "Identification of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response" that was issued on March 19, 2020:

- **Food Safety and Inspection Service:** Meat, poultry, swine and egg inspection and related laboratory services.
- **Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service:** Inspection of live plants and animals; managing animal and plant disease programs; veterinary, aviation and laboratory services in support of these operations.
- **Agricultural Marketing Service:** Commodity grading, commodity procurement, market news, and protecting fair agriculture trade performed by employees in the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS).
- **Farm Service Agency:** Farm loan and farm disaster and loss programs to ensure farmers can continue operations.
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service:** Flood prevention and watershed operations, protection of plants and vegetation for long-term research studies, and conservation payments for farms and ranches.
- **Forest Service:** Law enforcement, wildland firefighting, and other functions supporting protection of public safety at National Forests.
- **Agricultural Research Service:** Animal caretaking and preservation of research property.
- Support services needed to provide the functions listed above.

Failure to provide the services outlined above could jeopardize United States agriculture, food safety, and food production and supply and adversely affect the health, welfare and safety of the public.

3. This information is being furnished to USDA/AMS contractors to assist them in continuing to perform the essential government function of food production and delivery on behalf of USDA/AMS when law enforcement professionals seek to enforce otherwise applicable city or state shelter-in-place orders. For this reason, it is critical that USDA/AMS contractors **carry their identification and a copy of this directive when traveling to and from work locations and while delivering USDA/AMS purchased food products to verify their activity as an essential government service.**



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