COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR
AGRI-TOURISM OPERATIONS IN BC

The BC Restart Plan takes a phased approach to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19. Each phase provides guidance for individuals and businesses. The information in this document is written to provide business operators with suggested modifications that adhere to Phase 1 restrictions, which is the highest level of restriction. As phases progress, business owners may choose to relax certain practices as long as they continue to follow the guidance and orders of the Provincial Health Officer. Phases may change quickly if the number of COVID-19 cases increase in the community, so business owners will need to keep up to date with PHO guidance and be able to respond by adjusting business practices to adhere to requirements under the different phases of BC’s Restart Plan.

For more information on BC’s restart plan visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan

Introduction
Agri-tourism involves the public visiting farms and ranches to experience and increase their understanding of agriculture, rural life, and where B.C.’s food comes from. Where permitted by provincial, local and First Nation government law, some business owners use agri-tourism activities to generate additional income and/or to market and retail their product(s). It is anticipated that overall public demand for agri-tourism activities will likely be low during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the current Provincial Health Officer (PHO) COVID-19 Orders and Guidance, most activities that would be categorized as agri-tourism are discouraged or prohibited (e.g. events with greater than 50 people, PHO Order Mass Gatherings). Over the next several months, PHO Orders, Notices and Guidance will be updated and the level of restrictions may fluctuate which may impact an operator’s ability to meet PHO Orders and Guidance. Stay informed and responsive by checking updates at the BC Centre for Disease Control and PHO websites.
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General operations during the COVID-19 pandemic
If you choose to continue operating your business during the COVID-19 pandemic, you must follow PHO Orders and Guidance and develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan in accordance with the guidance from WorkSafeBC. Implementing PHO Orders and Guidance will decrease risk of virus transmission in your workplace and better ensure the health and safety of yourself, your employees and the community at large.

Steps 1 to 3 outline measures that will help your operation adhere to the PHO Orders and Guidance.

If you are unable to meet the PHO Orders and Guidance, you should postpone or cancel the activity.

**Step 1: Conduct workplace risk assessment**
Workplaces that choose to continue to operate during COVID-19 should conduct a workplace risk assessment, which can be found at: COVID-19 risk-informed decision-making guidelines for workplaces and businesses. This will assist business owners to determine what risks exist in their workplace and the level of risk involved in various activities or operations, as well as provide strategies to mitigate certain risks.

**Step 2: Implement safety precautions in your business or workplace**
All workplaces must implement the measures described in the PHO orders and employers must create a COVID-19 safety plan that include the basic precautions around: physical distancing, hand washing, covering nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, and monitoring and reporting illness. All employees must participate in an education session provided by the employer. Employees must receive education and training on safety measures and protocols for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. Training must include education on physical distancing, hygiene, monitoring and reporting illness, and staying home when ill.

**PHO Orders and Guidance Documents**
The office of the PHO has posted orders and guidance on their website. Guidance documents that are relevant to your worksite/operation should be reviewed: PHO Orders, Notices and Guidance. Agriculture operations that provide accommodation will be required to implement the PHO Order for Industrial Camps. All agricultural operations with employees are required to implement the PHO Order for Workplace COVID-19 Safety Plans.
Step 3: Review industry specific information and guidance
If implementing PHO Orders or guidance appears logistically challenging due to the nature of your operation, industry specific guidance may be needed. The federal and provincial government and industry associations are in the process of creating industry specific guidance.

If you have completed all the previous steps and still have questions or need further guidance or information please contact the Ministry of Agriculture 1-888-221-7141 or AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca for support in determining additional measures that may be needed.

Agri-tourism activities during the COVID-19 pandemic
This section provides information specifically for businesses who are currently providing or considering providing agri-tourism activities and/or providing agri-tourist or tourist accommodation. All agri-tourism activities must be conducted in accordance with applicable provincial, local and First Nation government laws.

Under the current (May 1, 2020) Provincial Health Officer (PHO) COVID-19 Orders and guidance, most activities that would be categorized as agri-tourism are discouraged or prohibited. Agri-tourism activities pose different levels of risk related to COVID-19 transmission. The PHO Order for Mass Gatherings which prohibits the gathering of people in excess of 50 people will impact agri-tourism activities that draw crowds. Due to variations in size and scope of agri-tourism activities and accommodation, different interventions may be required for operations that choose to remain open.
COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR AGRI-TOURISM OPERATIONS IN BC

Agri-tourism and Travel Restrictions
Agri-tourism tends to draw tourists from different regions, both domestic and international. Travel restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic may in large part determine the degree of demand for agri-tourism activities. Businesses involved in agri-tourism activities may want to consider remarketing activities to serve their local community to decrease potential transmission between communities.

Agri-tourism Events
Agri-tourism activities that draw large crowds are not permitted, as the PHO has ordered no crowds larger than 50 people. This applies to the following agri-tourism activities:
- Concerts
- Shows
- Weddings

Agri-tourism activities that require close proximity
Maintaining physical distance of 2 meters will be difficult for a number of agri-tourism activities. For this reason, the following activities should likely not occur:
- Cart, sleigh and tractor rides on the agricultural land
- Corn mazes
- Petting zoos

Day-to-day Agri-tourism activities
There are a number of agri-tourism activities that business owners may engage in on a daily basis. These activities tend to happen sporadically and with a small number of people for the purpose of marketing and selling farm product or livestock, and maintaining volunteers required to conduct necessary farm work. Some of these activities can or might be able to take place, if physical distancing requirements of 2m can be met and there are no orders prohibiting the activity (i.e. Mass gathering order), such as:
- On-farm or farmgate sales
- Agricultural heritage exhibits
- Educational activities, tours and demonstrations
- Livestock shows, cattle drives, and other activities to promote or market livestock
Additional practices for agri-tourism operations

Communicate
- Communicate with visitors planning a visit that if they feel ill, they should not come to the farm.
- Communicate your enhanced practices to customers by posting information on site, and on social media, newsletters, or websites.
- Stay informed and responsive by checking updates at the BC CDC and PHO websites.

Payment
- Limit number of customers paying at a time
- Install a plexiglass barrier between customers and employees at all transaction counters.
- Require employees to wear gloves when handling money and product or use hand-sanitize after every transaction.
- Considering using cash-less money transfers such cards or online transfers.
- Limit products on display for purchase.

Customer Hygiene
- Provide increased handwashing stations and/or sanitizer to all guests.
- Require that all guests sanitize or wash hands upon arrival.
- Use signs to remind people to use sanitizer before, during and after visit.

Cleaning
- Avoid permitting the use of tools and items that can not be cleaned and disinfected.
- If possible, pre-portion or pre-package items in bags or cartons before they are sold.
- Ask customers to only touch items that they intend to purchase.
- Disinfect surfaces (reusable bins, buckets, railings, doorknobs etc.) on a regular basis, several times a day.
- Washrooms should be cleaned and sanitized regularly throughout the day.
- Use the list of substances to disinfect on BC CDC’s Poster: cleaning and disinfecting for public surfaces.

Ensuring Customer Physical Distancing
- Postpone or cancel all large gatherings to avoid crowds.
- Temporarily close gathering areas such as picnic tables.
- Post signs to remind customers to maintain a physical distance of 2m between family units.
- Set maximum limits on the number of customers on site at any one time to enable customers to practice physical distancing.
- Consider using online ticketing to schedule visiting times, and increasing hours or days of operation to avoid overcrowding.
- Ensure washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels, and that warm running water is available. Antibacterial soap is not required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR AGRI-TOURISM AND TOURIST ACCOMMODATION

This section provides information specifically for businesses who are currently operating or considering providing agri-tourism or tourist accommodation. All agri-tourism and tourist accommodation must be conducted in accordance with provincial, local and First Nations government laws.

Under the current PHO COVID-19 Orders and guidance, most activities that would be categorized as agri-tourism activities are discouraged and subsequently agri-tourism accommodation are discouraged. Overall demand for agri-tourism accommodation is expected to be low. Agri-tourism accommodation pose different levels of risk related to transmission of COVID-19, therefore different interventions may be required for different types of accommodation.

Agri-tourism and tourist accommodation and travel restrictions
Agri-tourism and subsequently agri-tourism and tourist accommodation tend to draw tourists from different regions, both domestic and international. Travel restrictions put in place during COVID-19 pandemic may in large part determine the degree of demand for agri-tourism accommodation.

Accommodation inside an existing residence
Agri-tourism accommodation that invites the public inside an existing residence have a high risk of transmission due to shared entry and facilities. The following list of types of accommodation should likely not be provided:

- Bed and breakfast
- Room rental
- Suite rental with shared entry or facilities

Accommodation inside a separate suite, cabin or other structure
Accommodation that provides an entirely separate living quarters with separate entrances and no shared facilities, provides a lower risk of transmission. Operators must comply with PHO Orders and guidance. Enhanced cleaning measures should take place after each stay and PPE should be worn during cleaning. Detailed information on cleaning can be found in the PHO document Guidance for the hotel sector.
Accommodation in a vehicle, trailer, tent or other structure located on a campsite, field or other area

NOTE: Business owners providing accommodation for workers must implement the PHO Order for Industrial Camps.

Provincial campsites are open with limitations. However, at this time private campsites could continue to operate as long as operators comply with PHO Orders and guidance and the operation is conducted in accordance with provincial, local and First Nations laws. Additional measures to be implemented should include:

- A maximum of 50 guests.
- Separate accommodation zones for each guest-booking should be indicated by markings on the ground
- Enhanced cleaning protocols should be put in place for shared facilities including washrooms
- Walkways/paths should be large enough to allow appropriate physical distancing of guests and staff. Direct traffic through the use of markings, signs, barriers, etc.
- Communal amenities e.g. shared firepits, picnic areas, playgrounds, etc. should not be used
- Provide handwashing facilities and/or access to hand sanitizers

For further questions or information contact:

Ministry of Agriculture at 1-888-221-7141 or AgriServiceBC@gov.bc.ca