

## **Kennesaw State University**

### **Advanced Operational Guidelines to Improve Field Research – June 2020**

The primary goal of this guidance is the health and safety of our field station staff, students, faculty, and the general public; and all KSU employees engaged in field work not located on KSU property.

- All Field Station users must not be compelled to engage in activities with which they are not comfortable. Field Station users have the right to refuse to engage in activities that could expose them to infectious, food spoilage, contaminating, or other potentially hazardous agents and must obtain positive consent of their willingness to assume the risks involved (by signing the [KSU Field Station Waiver form](#)).
- The primary defense against the spread of infectious agents, food spoilage organisms, and contaminants is personal hygiene, sanitary practices, and physical distancing (6 - 10 feet).
- To ensure continuity of operations for Fall 2020, Field Station staff will only include essential on-site work, work at safe distances (physical distancing), minimization of direct contact with one another and surfaces, and regular hand-washing and use of disinfectants and cleaning agents.
- For field work that employs larger groups, it is advised to stagger work assignments in space and time to allow for physical distancing. If a necessary task requires two or more people to complete, they should implement safe distancing when possible.
- When possible, field workers should minimize direct contact with each other or contact with materials or surfaces contacted by others.
- All field workers should wash hands prior to and wear masks while harvesting, cleaning, and transporting materials for human consumption (e.g. fruit, vegetables, mushrooms, eggs, etc.).
- Instructions for field station work at the KSU Field Station should be communicated to and approved by Field Station Manager prior to beginning the work.
- Instructional documentation should be created to train any new personnel in necessary research tasks. This documentation will provide baseline instructions which can be followed-up either virtually or in person, but while maintaining physical distancing.

#### **Health of KSU Field Station Workers:**

- On a daily basis, field station workers should assess their body temperature to ensure they do not have an elevated body temperature or other symptoms indicative of illness or infection.
- Any field station worker who exhibits a fever or other symptoms of an illness or infection are required to contact his/her supervisor and the Field Station Manager and will not be permitted on the field station property.
- Any person who has experienced symptoms of an illness or infection during the past 14 days will not be permitted on the field station property or to engage in field station activities until cleared for work by a medical professional and granted permission by his/her supervisor and the Field Station Manager.

## **Physical Distancing, Hand Washing, Disinfection, and Material Quarantining**

- Recommended physical distancing is 6 to 10 feet between any two people.
  - If interactions need to take place in person, they should be conducted with a minimum separation distance of 6 feet and ideally outdoors. For example, as a rule-of-thumb, in a field planted at 35" row spacing would involve maintaining a minimum separation of 2 or 3 rows.
  - The number of people riding in the same farm truck, vehicle, or tractor for field work should be minimized.
  - If within an enclosed building (e.g. an office), the number of people in close proximity should be minimized.
- When possible, field station users should be assigned exclusive use of specific areas and equipment for extended periods of time (i.e. hours or days). This includes workspaces, fields, trucks, tractors, utility vehicles, sprayers, etc. The goal is to minimize direct contact between users or contact with materials or surfaces contacted by users.
  - Space or equipment must be clearly understood to be assigned to a particular user. If you are unsure, check with the Field Station Manager before proceeding.
  - Use only your assigned space or vehicle and disinfect its surfaces before use, when appropriate. Communicate with the Field Station Manger if you desire an exception.
- In areas where multiple groups and users have ongoing operations, coordinate between groups to ensure appropriate social distancing and sanitary practices can be maintained.
- Use good hand washing procedures at a regular interval, even when you are the only assigned user for an area or equipment.
  - All field station users will wash hands when they arrive, at each break, and before they leave. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with your hands, even if they were just washed. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place with other people, touching surfaces, blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer and cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Daily disinfecting is recommended for commonly touched surfaces (e.g. door handles, toilet handles, tools, steering wheels and hand controls of vehicles/tractors, etc.). Treat all common spaces and surfaces as if they are contaminated and reduce exposure as much as possible.
  - Disinfect surfaces following best practices (70% ethanol, Lysol, or other approved disinfectants).
- If several researchers will meet up in the field, it is suggested to prepare a COVID bucket beforehand and bring to the field. This would be a bucket (or container) with a couple of boxes of latex gloves, a labelled squirt bottle with 70% ethanol, and a zip-lock bag with additional face masks. Contents of the bucket can be used to disinfect shared field equipment between use, and face masks when researchers need to be close to each other to perform field work.
- Other items recommended for field work include walkie-talkies (hand-held two-way radios), fluorescent vests, and bottled water.

## **Field Work**

- For faculty or field station users who must travel locally to perform their duties, physical distancing guidelines should be followed. If two or more people are traveling to the same workplace, it is suggested to drive different vehicles.
- For non-local travel, [KSU travel guidelines](#) must be followed. For any exceptions, please contact your ADR or the Office of Research.