



A Conversation about COVID-19: Experts in Ag

Rain or Shine or Virus, Farms and Ranches Supply Our Food Needs

By Julie Murphree, Arizona Farm Bureau Outreach Director

If you are on social media, you've seen all the memes regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, as declared by the World Health Organization a couple of months ago. Some are funny. Some are sad. Some are encouraging and heartwarming. All are a way to cope with this odd, and at times, terrorizing new normal we live in.

My favorite, "We're discovering we can live without celebrities and sports stars, but we can't live without farmers," perhaps sums it all up. And maybe just maybe, it makes us realize the food supply system is much more complex and important than anyone in America ever imagined, certainly paused long enough to consider.

Empty grocery shelves? Shortages of food staples? Lines around the corner to wait and get into the store? Nope. Not talking about Russia or a developing nation. These are scenes in America right now. And, you're not waking up from some nightmare.

A lot is happening on the ground out on our Arizona farms and ranches. And different sectors in agriculture are being impacted differently. Farmers and ranchers continue to work 24/7 to maintain America's food supply. And, yes, we are having disruptions in the supply chain; not supply though or another way to put it quantity. We'll have meat in the meat case, but perhaps not the variety of choices we are typically used to.

But we are in a panic including stealing from farmers. "I have to tell you, Julie, I'm pretty stressed right now," said retail farmer Frank Martin of Crooked Sky Farms and Maricopa County Farm Bureau member. "We have had another break-in at the farm where they have stolen 20 dozen eggs and produce. We have had a lot of orders lately; a good thing because we don't know how much longer the farmers markets may go on. The problem is people are not very patient at all as they think we can get large orders out with a two-hour notice, or

they just drive in and want to pick something without calling. We are trying to maintain a 24-hour advance notice but may need to extend it to 48 hours. Well, that's my midnight rant, I've got to get a little sleep and be ready for the market in a few hours. Thank you, Julie." The text came to me at 12:48 a.m. in the morning, sleeping soundly, unlike Farmer Frank who had been dealing with a break-in.

My regular conversations articles touch base with experts and ask them questions. This time, considering my topic, I wanted a broad swath of input from more than one voice. So, the main question I asked all my experts, "What do you anticipate might be the impact of the COVID-19 in the agriculture sector?"

Arizona Agriculture Overall Perspective

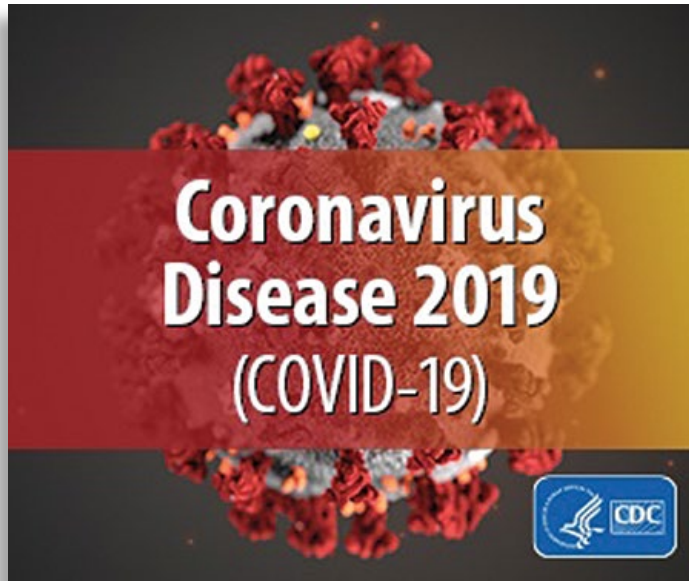
Our health, our security, our liberty and freedom depend on our ability to feed ourselves. As the

Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture, I can tell you we have plenty of food in Arizona and the nation. So, I'd encourage Arizona families not to panic.

We need to follow the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). For anyone running out and buying the stores empty, we have lots of food in America. We produce more food than any country in the world. We in Arizona have millions of gallons of milk produced each week in our dairies, our egg ranches produce millions of eggs each day. There is plenty of beef to go around. While we encourage families to buy only what you need, the bulk buyers are influencing the empty shelves. In the meantime, stores will catch up.

I'm trying to tell our Arizona families our food system will catch up with us, especially if we will just use some common sense and avoid panic. I'm sharing with people I talk with to consider where

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The current pandemic makes consumers realize the food supply system is much more complex and important than anyone in America ever imagined.

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Air Med Care Network: Have Peace of Mind

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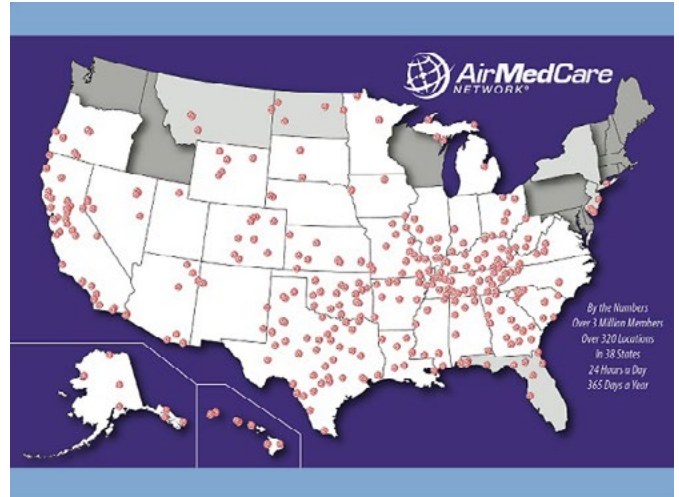
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to all Arizona Farm Bureau Members - \$134 and their family members. Members can call 800-793-0010 to add this membership option.



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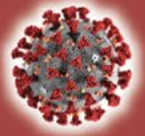
Spring has sprung and students and teachers are still at home. In this interesting time Arizona Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom is working hard to provide online and digital resources to parents and teachers to keep our student's learning. What better way to keep learning engaging and fun than bringing in a little agriculture!!

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Covid-19

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we would be if we were dependent on other countries for our food supply. This COVID-19 pandemic underscores the need to protect American agriculture. And, when pandemics like this happen or other emergencies, we can feed ourselves. God bless America!

Mark W. Killian, Arizona Department of Agriculture Director

The Dairyman's Perspective

Well first, we must be milking cows every day regardless of a pandemic or not. And even outside the pandemic, rain has impacted milk production, down a bit. Class 1 (fluid milk) Shamrock, Kroger and Safeway customers, have been taking a large amount of extra milk. United Dairyman of Arizona (UDA) is effectively moving it through the plant because of the demand. Our other dairy products are a different story and mean we must understand what's happening with different sectors in retail. For example, dine-in restaurants are suffering.

As a result, we have concern for our other dairy products. While class 1 milk sales are through the roof (the gallon of milk you buy at the grocery store, for example), UDA processes much more than class 1. And because much of what we process goes onto retail eating establishments that includes cheese to McDonald's for example, massive stockpiles of product are not moving right now. This is maxing out UDA's warehouse. What we can move goes out at a significant discount for example, powdered milk at \$.80 to .90 cents versus the \$1.15 it normally brings.

Schools are a concern too. Our schools depend on lots of dairy. So, the longer the shutdown of schools the greater our concern. There is plenty of milk for all the products and there's plenty of milk to provide for the schools. [In the meantime, as the crisis continued, Arizona dairy farmers for a period were forced to dump milk because there was virtually nowhere for it too go.]

The disruptions have changed the supply lines significantly. So, some areas in the dairy supply chain might be a bit more robust, where other areas of the dairy supply chain may suffer. People in tough times return to staples, your basics and that typically includes milk.

We're pivoting to unusual requests too. The UDA team tells me that one of our customers asked for a larger supply of condensed milk. So, we are accommodating them. Ultimately, we are being as fluid as our fluid milk, working to adjust our distribution and deal with product overwhelming our inventory if not moving. Whatever the customer wants they get.

Paul Rovey, former president of DMI and board member of United Dairyman of Arizona

The Cotton Farmer's Perspective

In the last three weeks we've seen a drop in the cotton futures market of 10 cents or more. This is likely because many of the world's mills are in China and other Southeast Asian countries and operations there have been interrupted. On the good side, another report indicates additional export sales are occurring because the cotton

price has fallen so much.

The global market needs cotton, but buyers are timid to make major moves, as then the cotton needs shipping. Then once the cotton gets where it needs to go the buyer needs to be assured, they will have a workforce available to utilize the cotton in the mills.

On our farm every acre has something growing on it right now. Since there is no harvesting currently this is a quiet time of year. With everything planted we've not seen any delays with input supplies.

At the same time, things are eerily quiet in the office. No phones are ringing, any industry group meetings I normally am attending, and other meetings are cancelled.

Our customers for our forage crops, particularly the dairy industry, have been really hit hard in recent years with low prices. The milk prices had just started to move up when this hit, now the price has declined again. When the dairy industry isn't making money, it is hard for them to buy any feed.

I've been talking with my son, Ross, about 'Black Swan' events. If this isn't one, I don't know what is. A Black Swan event is one that usually occurs out of nowhere and that no one has anticipated. At this point it's hard to tell what the disruptions are going to be.

How far does it go? If we watch the stock market each day it doesn't make people feel very secure. It's hard to extrapolate what all the problems are going to be. People seem to be concerned about what's not on the shelves, but most of the distribution system is working very well. Having said that, what happens if it doesn't?

For our farm, we still plan on operating as originally planned, especially since we only get one chance a year to adjust your inventory and that's when you put the seed in the ground. Some businesses can adjust weekly, daily or hourly. Our horizon is yearly.

We get one chance a year and that's when we know what we're going to pour into the planter hopper, or not. *If prices are too low to even think you can get your variable costs back to think you can contribute something to your fixed costs.*

We continue to do cotton and forage crops. We plant all our cotton as a double crop, no till after wheat. The wheat we will be harvesting as forage since grain prices are so low, which means we harvest it as green chop. We sell it as silage to the dairies. The wheat silage is a low water use crop since we grow it in the winter.

We've also been keeping our employees working with some time on the clock even though there isn't much to do on the farm in the cooler months. We also provide them with housing and utilities. We work hard to keep our good people.

My friends in the vegetable business are held to a tighter and tougher timeline in getting product to our tables. Nothing is better for your immune system than Vitamin A and the other vitamins in our fresh vegetables. In today's environment, we all need to keep our bodies in good shape.

Ron Rayner is a co-owner of A Tumbling T Ranches in Goodyear, Arizona. The farm produces alfalfa, cotton and wheat.

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Arizona Agriculture's CHOICES

AITC *Continued from page 2*

Pop on over to www.azfb.org/aitc and view the many online resources that are now available for teachers.

Online Story Time

Allows students to build their digital library and enjoy an online reading of some of the very best ag accurate books. Google slide activities accompany online story time to keep students engaged and remembering what they read.

Online Presentations

The AITC Team has been able to record several fun and engaging video lessons. Want to know how bees communicate? Want to know where your pizza really comes from? Want to learn how cows and people are different? Maybe you want to sprout some seeds? Be sure to check these video lesson and more!

Hatch at Home

The #hatchathome project now has nine incubators being used by teachers and parents! It has been a neat experience watching students gather around the computer screen to check in on their classroom eggs. Happy hatching to all of our #hatchathome participants!

What are teachers saying about AITC's new online resources?

Thank you so much for all the resources you have shared with us! You have no idea how much we appreciate just being able to plug in those activities! This is a huge learning curve for all of us and you have made this so much easier! – The 2nd grade team at Desert Mountain Elementary really appreciates you!

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Making the Transition from Forests to Farms

By Kayla Rouse, Kimberly-Clark Corporation

As people shelter-in-place across the country, we've seen our relationship with toilet paper change dramatically. Kimberly-Clark makes nearly all of its trusted products, including Kleenex, Scott and Cottonelle, in the U.S. at one of its 15 manufacturing sites, and our people are working hard to close the gap on the sudden demand.



The experience has also led people to ask where toilet tissue comes from, and most will point to trees. That's largely true today, but far from any forest, Kimberly-Clark continues to innovate new sources of environmentally preferred fibers for our product – and the answer to traditional tree fibers may lie with farmers.

In Kansas, as farmers were working to clear the wheat straw from their fields, Kimberly-Clark's fiber development team looked at how

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Covid-19

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The Arizona Farm Bureau President's Perspective

Currently, the production of food in this country is strong as farmers continue to follow the cycle that mother nature dictates and not the volatility of the financial markets. There are ample supplies in frozen storage facilities and raw agricultural products are being shipped to stores and food processors as they always have. In addition, continued restrictions on public gatherings will likely have an impact on demand for some farm products and shift supplies to grocers and away from restaurants and other similar commercial markets, helping to adjust the flow of goods to match demand.

"However, farmers don't control the integration of the rest of the supply chain and other factors could disrupt distribution including higher than expected demand at retail establishments and other policy decisions related to the pandemic. For example, Mexico's decision to severely restrict the border to legal worker crossings could impact the supply chain for leafy greens and other fresh vegetables. In Yuma County and Imperial County, where we produce 85% of the U.S. supply of leafy greens this time of year, we will still need 40,000 to 50,000 harvesters working each day in vegetable fields. Of those, 15,000 harvesters cross daily into the U.S. from San Luis, Mexico to come work harvesting lettuce, broccoli and cauliflower.

"The limiting cancellation of routine immigration services will undoubtedly have an impact on the availability of fresh produce, not because we aren't able to produce it, but because we already have a labor shortage in agriculture, and this will exasperate that shortage. If we can't get produce out of the field, then we can't restock the grocer's bins or your plate.

"As Arizona farmers and ranchers, we're committed to doing our best to supply to local, national and global markets. In agriculture, we are our brother's keeper in good times and bad. We commend the work of all those who continue to toil to make sure our food demands are met and pray for a speedy resolution to this global pandemic."

Stefanie Smallhouse, Arizona Farm Bureau President and a rancher, with her husband Andy, in southern Arizona

The Agri-Business Perspective

It does not take official declarations by authorities to illuminate

the fact that Agriculture is an essential industry, at least not for the folks engaged in the food chain as a producer handler or possessor or distributor.

But the sooner that is stated legally and the barriers in the food chain removed and reduced the more certain our society will feel about what is absolutely the most uncertain of circumstances.

Agriculture production and the people engaged in what otherwise is considered a legacy industry by the average citizen is now clearly being understood as the very fiber that makes a society's fabric.

I am certain that US agriculture and the incredible folks that produce our feed, seed, food and fiber in this State and our Country can meet the challenges of COVID19.

Eric Wilkey, Arizona Grain President

The Produce Farmer's Perspective

Duncan Family Farms would like to express our heartfelt support for all our community members near and far that are suffering the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic. Our agricultural communities across the United States are comprised of strong individuals who are accustomed to dealing with diverse challenges on a day to day basis. These people know how to keep America fed in good times and in tough times. The good news is the crops in our fields will keep growing. It is just vitally important we keep our team members safe and healthy so we can continue to harvest and distribute product to the stores and to our local communities.

Duncan Family Farms is committed to maintaining a safe and secure workplace so that we can accomplish our mission of producing clean, healthy, life-giving food while contributing to an improved environment and giving back to our community. At Duncan Family Farms safety has always been our first priority and we will continue to be vigilant to ensure that these measures will help all our team members, partners and community members to stay safe and healthy as we navigate through these unprecedented times. We are confident that the agricultural communities in the state of Arizona and across the nation will continue to supply ample food for all.

Arnott Duncan, Duncan Family Farms

Forrest to Farms

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to help farmers find new ways to get rid of the straw. Jessica McCarty, an expert on crop residue at Michigan Tech University, explained that, "The easiest way is to burn it, but that impacts air quality. If there was an economic way for farmers to reutilize their wheat straw, I believe burning would just about go away."

The team started by calling farmers in the area to obtain samples of wheat straw. Kimberly-Clark's engineers and scientists then developed methods for extracting fiber from the straw, and the team formed new partnerships to begin purchasing wheat straw directly from local farmers.

The Appalachian Woodlands Alliance (AWA) is another example of how Kimberly-Clark is working with individual landowners in sustainable forestry management. This unique relationship creates economic benefits across the supply chain, and ultimately, provides a way to protect both the ecosystem and the livelihoods of these landowners for generations to come.

Kimberly-Clark has committed to source 90 percent of fiber used in its tissue products from environmentally preferred fiber sources by 2025, and working with farmers in Arizona and across the U.S. will get it closer to that goal.





HELPING HANDS: Free delivery for your community during COVID-19

We're in this together. Stay at home if you should. Help if you can. Deliver the supplies your neighbors need.

What is Helping Hands?

Helping Hands is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving those most vulnerable to COVID-19: senior citizens, the immunocompromised, and people with pre-existing medical conditions which put them at additional risk. Our community of volunteers deliver groceries, medicine, and other necessary supplies to empower everyone to stay healthy and be as responsible as they can be.

How it Works

Request help: Do you need something brought to you or a loved one's home? Sign up on our website and let us know more about what you need. We'll send you a text message on your mobile phone that connects you to a local volunteer who will run your errand for you.

Volunteer to help: Are you healthy and ready to help your neighbors? Create a profile on our website. You'll then be able to see things

people need delivered and can select the neighbors you'd like to help.

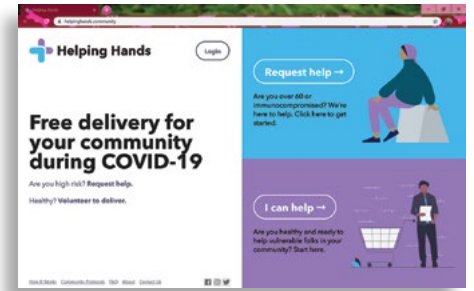
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A message from your Arizona Ford Dealers

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You have a lot to take care of let the Arizona Ford dealers take care of you.

One more way the Arizona Ford dealers are looking to lend a hand to those in need around them is by giving back.

For a lot of Arizonan's, putting food on the table is a challenge in regular circumstances. You can imagine how that challenge has been heightened in recent days. To that end, the Ford has made a fifty thousand dollar (\$50K) toward St. Mary's Food Bank's Emergency Food Box Program and other vital services. The Donation will allow St. Mary's, to provide an additional 350,000 meals to those in need in Arizona.

For over 100 years Ford has been helping to build this country and our community right here is Arizona, and they don't plan on stopping any time soon.

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Newest Statewide Benefit: Dollywood Parks and Resort

Arizona Farm Bureau is proud to announce our newest member benefit partnership with Dollywood Parks and Resorts. Members now save \$10 per 1-day ticket to Dollywood. Our ticket price at \$69 saves \$10 compared to the normal \$79 per ticket. Simply log on to www.azfb.org to access the special link.

The 2010 Applause Award winner, Dolly Parton's Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., is recognized as one of the world's best theme parks. Spanning 150 acres and located near the entrance to Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Dollywood offers more than 40 rides and attractions, including Lightning Rod, the world's first launching wood coaster and the world's fastest wood coaster; Wild Eagle, the country's first wing coaster; Fire Chaser Express, the nation's first dual-launch family coaster; as well as Thunderhead wooden coaster; and the steel thriller Mystery Mine.

Other popular attractions include the Dollywood Express, a 110-ton coal-fired steam engine. Wildwood Grove, the largest expansion in park history, opens in 2019 and provides 11 thrilling new experiences for families to enjoy. Dollywood's entertainment is recognized worldwide, having received more trophies than any other theme park

for its live entertainment which showcases country, bluegrass, Southern gospel, classic rock 'n' roll and Appalachian music. Daily demonstrations by more than a dozen master craftsmen offer a glimpse into the authentic artistry of the area's rich heritage with everything from hand-blown glass to blacksmithing.

In addition to mouth-watering Southern-style food offered throughout the park, Dollywood hosts several of the South's largest festivals throughout the year bringing special performing groups and concerts to celebrate each season. Dollywood operates from late

March through early January. Due to COVID-19, operating days and hours vary; for more information visit Dollywood.com.

Log onto www.azfb.org to purchase tickets through our special Arizona Farm Bureau link. Contact our Member benefits coordinator at taylorrogers@azfb.org or 480-635-3609 for any questions or concerns.

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Arizona Agriculture's CHOICES

The Faces of Arizona Agriculture: Josh and Lily Moore

- Josh is a 4H agent with the UA Cooperative Extension Service.
- Lily is a Research Tech for the UA.
- They have one daughter, Elena.
- They are both graduates from the University of Arizona.
- They are both Pima County Board Members

Arizona Agriculture is a \$23.3 billion industry.

