

### ***Graduate Needs Assessment Survey:***

I hope you all are doing well and your transition to an online format is going smoothly for you. The Department of Animal Science has created a survey for graduate students that we are asking you to complete. This is a needs-assessment survey so the department can determine what we can do to ensure that you have all of the resources you need to be successful for the remainder of the Spring semester. Please complete this survey by 9:00 am on Monday, March 30, 2020.

[https://tamuag.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0IXAXk3PEKXJNS5](https://tamuag.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0IXAXk3PEKXJNS5)

If you have any questions, please let Dr. Dunlap or me know.

Thanks!

Carissa



Listed below are important links that provide Up-To-Date information:

Brazos County Health District:

<http://www.brazoshealth.org/node/87>

TAMU FAQ page:

<https://www.tamu.edu/coronavirus/#FAQ>

COALS:

<https://aglifesciences.tamu.edu/covid19/>

Extension:

<https://texashelp.tamu.edu/>

Vice President for Research:

<https://vpr.tamu.edu/covid-19>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Texas Health & Human Services:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>

Dear Research Administrator Community,

In an effort to keep the lines of communication open between SRS and you we want to share the latest information from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) concerning the flexibility in the administration of grants. At this point the memorandum states what federal agencies MAY do but there is no guarantee that all agencies will allow this flexibility. SRS will monitor the situation and provide further information as it is forthcoming from various agencies. Please contact your post award administrator if you have questions concerning on the information in the attached OMB Memorandum M-20-17.

Yesterday, March 19, 2020 OMB has released [M-20-17](#), *“Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) due to Loss of Operations”* which provides similar administrative relief as listed in M-20-11 to an expanded scope of recipients affected by the loss of operational capacity and increased costs due to the COVID-19 crisis.

A link to the OMB memo and other federal guidance, as well as a repository for institutional guidance can be located on the COGR [website here](#).

Thank you,  
David

**David Hollingsworth | Director Preaward**  
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# OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT ---

**MICHAEL K. YOUNG**

PRESIDENT

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I would like to express my tremendous gratitude to everyone helping us mobilize the entire university in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

In a matter of days, your heroic efforts have helped us fundamentally change everything we do - from educating our students, to conducting research, to maintaining essential business operations.

During this challenging time, you have shown us the true character of our university community. Aggies never shrink from a challenge, they always rise to the occasion - with decisive action, inspiring innovation and remarkable determination.

As faculty members, you have demonstrated your incredible care for and commitment to our students. Although circumstances have dramatically altered your plans for research and teaching, you have stepped up at an important moment. You have shared your collective wisdom and resources with colleagues across the university, working rapidly and tirelessly to rewrite syllabi and take all of our educational efforts online. I know how meaningful your efforts are for our students, and I want you to know how much all of us appreciate your hard work.

I also want to thank and recognize the dedication of our exceptional staff across the university. At a time of great need, you have stepped forward with flexibility, resiliency and resolve. In addition to keeping our campus clean and safe, you are providing the entire IT infrastructure that is making all of our endeavors possible - from online classes, to Zoom meetings, to keeping our Learning Management System running smoothly. In only days you have set up both the TAMU [Keep Teaching](#) site to help faculty get connected quickly with resources as well as the TAMU [Keep Learning](#) site to help students do the same. You have also conducted most of the 1,342 technology trainings centrally, as well as countless sessions in our colleges and departments. The [Central TAMU COVID-19 site](#) that provides a centralized hub for updates and resources has been viewed more than 325,000 times.

As we move so many services online, we know the process won't be perfect. There will be challenges that will arise and things that may not work as planned. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we do our best to maintain the very highest quality of education and research, as well as ensure the health and safety of everyone at Texas A&M.

For many members of our university community, this has been a demanding time. So many of you have worked round-the-clock, night and day, without rest or relief. You have had to adjust work schedules and find new solutions for childcare. While words may be of little comfort, I want you to know this. We all see your efforts. We appreciate all of your contributions. And we are all truly grateful for your extraordinary service.

Thank you for your support and your continued commitment as we work together to keep everyone safe and carry out our educational mission.

Sincerely,

Michael K. Young  
President



# Extension Updates:

Please find the attached document *Guidelines for Field Scouting, Site Visits, Result/Demonstration Work, and Walk-ins*. These are in **effect beginning March 21, 2020 until further notice**. These apply to **all Extension personnel** and to **students under your supervision**.

*If you have questions please contact your immediate supervisor and as needed the appropriate Associate Director.*

*Thank you for your help in minimizing your and others potential exposure to COVID-19. The health and safety of our Team members in Extension are very important.*

*Dan Hale and Jeff Ripley*

## **Guidelines for Field Scouting, Site Visits, Result/Demonstration Work, and Walk-ins**

**Situation:** This guideline has been developed to address the following general items.

- Many IPM Agents have contracted fields to be regularly scouted for pests and agronomic development.
- Specialists, Program Specialists and County Agents are often asked to visit particular fields to ascertain problems encountered by the clientele.
- County Agents and other Extension personnel are often asked to make site visits to diagnose stakeholder problems and collect specimens for diagnostic testing.
- Extension personnel, including student workers, are involved in working fields for test plots and other result/demonstrations.
- Stakeholders will sometimes bring samples for inspection to the county offices and Extension/Research Centers.

**Travel restrictions:** County based personnel are not supposed to travel on official business outside of the county/counties for which they are responsible. Extension Specialists and Program Specialists should avoid travel beyond the geographical area for which they are responsible. **All site visit travel, regardless of distance must be approved through the identified approval process.** Given the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 situation, be sure to consult the latest guidance on travel restrictions.

### **Travel Approval:**

**If these activities can be delayed they should be delayed as long as possible. However, we know that some of these activities are deemed mission critical and time sensitive.**

**Regularly scheduled field scouting:** If you have fields that you regularly scout, submit a scouting plan that describes where you go, and the dates those sites will be visited. Reporting date ranges of a few days is acceptable. These plans should be submitted to the District Extension Administrator, IPM Coordinator and/or associate department head who will forward these to the Director's Office.

**Irregular site visits:** If you are requested to visit a field to ascertain a problem, gather information from the client to determine the risk associated with the issue. Determine the date (or range of a few dates) the visit will occur and submit a request to conduct the visit with your immediate supervisor. The supervisor will determine necessity of the site visit and if critical will forward to the Director's Office for approval.

**Applied research activities:** We understand that preplanned experimental designs (including but not limited to planting, maintenance of plots) are time critical activities. Develop a plan that describes where you go, and the dates of the activities and personnel involved in that activity (minimize number of personnel to essential only). The plan should include travel by individuals in separate vehicles to maintain social distancing. Reporting date ranges of a few days is acceptable. These plans should be submitted to the immediate supervisor (DEA and/or ADH) who will forward these to the Director's Office for approval if they concur that the activities are critical.

**Laboratory sample assessment:** Often samples must be processed in the laboratory to determine the causative agent involved. When acquiring the samples in person, follow the procedure outlined in irregular site visits. For submission of specimen, please contact the appropriate Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab. At current time, the TX Plant Diagnostic Labs does not accept walk-in samples. Samples should be mailed or a courier service utilized – Next day service is highly encouraged to maintain the integrity of the sample. TX Plant Diagnostic Labs: TPDDL-College Station (<http://plantclinic.tamu.edu>) 979-845-8032 or TX High Plain Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab (<https://thppdd-lab.tamu.edu>) [Specializes in Small Grains and Row Crops]. Samples should be accompanied with the appropriate submission forms.

**Best Practices when conducting scouting/site visits/applied research activities:** Avoid contact with other people. Do not take others along with you unless absolutely necessary. If someone must join you at a site do not travel in the same vehicle, do not have a meal together and maintain social distancing at all times (6 feet or more). Avoid face-to-face interaction with the client when possible. Ideally, scout the field or site alone and provide information to the client via phone, text, email, or other non-face-to-face venue. If the situation requires face-to-face interaction with the client, practice good social distancing. While travelling to the site location avoid interacting with groups of people (i.e. when stopping for fuel or food, etc.). If it is necessary for more than one individual to be present to establish, monitor, or harvest a plot, please obtain clearance through each of the individuals' direct supervisors prior to the activity.

**County Extension and Research/Extension Center Walk-ins:** Encourage stakeholders to send photos and to use the diagnostic services already provided by Texas A&M AgriLife. Growers/farmers/homeowners should be notified (via door signage or text on county websites) about sample drop-off procedures during this time. They should call before dropping at the specified location. Then the extension personnel can pick these up using the non-pharmaceutical interventions specified by CDC, and without face-to-face contact (<https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/index.html>).

## Pesticide CEU Training Guide - Distance Learning Programming by Extension and Online Courses:

All Extension Agents: You should have received an email with attached documents pertaining to *Pesticide CEU Training Guide*, which are in effect beginning March 21, 2020 and are in place until further notice. These guidelines in particular discuss pesticide CEU programming offered by distance technology. This is a time when agricultural workers need training opportunities and our team at Agricultural and Environmental Safety has worked with the Texas Department of Agriculture to obtain certain allowances for Extension to offer Distance Education opportunities.

If you have questions please contact your immediate supervisor and our Agricultural and Environmental Safety team in Extension.

### SENT ON BEHALF OF Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Director Dr. Jeff Hyde

Extension colleagues,

We appreciate your focus and commitment this week as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve. We are giving careful consideration to how we maintain business operations moving forward. Please see the following updates as we have several important items that will impact how you carry out work on behalf of the agency moving forward.

#### Face-to-Face Meetings

All face-to-face meetings will be cancelled ***through April 17*** at the earliest. This status will be reviewed based on the statewide public health disaster declaration made by the Governor (see attached declaration). Because the period may well be extended, all employees should continue to make contingency plans for no face-to-face events through May 4<sup>th</sup>.

- Further direction on Texas 4-H Roundup will be provided early next week.

#### Office Environments

Only **ESSENTIAL** employees should be available to work on site. Supervisors should communicate with administration their skeletal crew plans. It is stressed that only skeletal crews are essential to operations. Other key guidelines:

- People, businesses and communities should immediately undertake hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation practices that are accessible, affordable and known to be effective against COVID-19.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- People who are known to have, or are under investigation or monitoring, for COVID-19, should adhere to the direction provided to them by duly authorized persons, including public health officials. Failure to abide by such direction may result in involuntary quarantine or isolation for the purposes of preventing further community spread of COVID-19.
- Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
- If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often
- **Faculty and staff (between midnight March 20 and midnight April 3) who do not avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people should self-isolate for 14 days.**

### **Resource Gaps Survey**

Those needing COVID-19 educational resources or who have identified areas needing to be addressed by the agency can visit the following Qualtrics survey: [https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_50jR6NweloE0GmF](https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50jR6NweloE0GmF).

### **Pesticide Safety Education**

Guidelines have been established for Auxin training and Pesticide CEU training using Distance Technology and D2L courses. Specialists and agents will be receiving this resource document to utilize in program planning/implementation.

### **Digital Engagement**

As we transition to digital program delivery, refer to the Digital Resources hub for employees: <https://digitaleducation.agrilife.org/digital-resources-for-employees/>. The Digital Education Learning Team is also providing opportunities for rapid course development to specialists. Go to the following link to learn more: <https://digitaleducation.agrilife.org/online-course-dev/>. The Team has assigned an instructional designer (ID) to each of the Extension regions. Requests for working with the IDs should flow through the Regional Program Leaders.

### **Online Technology Resource Document**

Using Technology to Reach Clientele is a resource through Extension Organizational Development to assist with online program delivery planning: <http://od.tamu.edu/using-technology-to-reach-clientele/>.

### **Conference Services/Fee-based Virtual Sessions**

AgriLife Conference Services can host registration and payment processing for online program offerings. Visit Conference Services and click on the About Us page. Complete the appropriate registration questionnaire. There is a minimum of two business days for this registration to go live once the final registration questionnaire has been received and processing finalized. Once live on the website, the registrant will go online, register, pay via credit card, select to mail a check or receive an invoice (information about Payment Options is on the About Us page of the website). If payment is submitted by credit card, they will be emailed a confirmation that contains text directions how to access the course/webinar. If they indicate they are mailing a check, those instructions will be emailed once the check is posted. If they wish to receive an invoice, once we receive the required purchase order and W9, they will be emailed the instructions to access the course/webinar. Visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/AboutUs>.

### **TexasData COVID-19 Reporting**

Guidance on TexasData COVID-19 reporting will be provided through a series of upcoming online trainings. Please note the following dates and times:

- Wednesday, March 25, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/351525220>
- Thursday, March 26, 1-2:30 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/766851629>
- Monday, March 30, 10-11:30 a.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/803576602>
- Tuesday, March 31, 1-2:30 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/386093608>
- Thursday, April 2 10-11:30 a.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/934556379>

### **Reporting Financial Expenditures for COVID-19**

For appropriate staff and others with conferences and events cancelled recently due to concerns related to COVID-19, there have been questions regarding allowability of expenditures on sponsored research accounts. If travel plans, programs, or events are canceled due to COVID-19, the costs associated with these cancellations or rescheduling that are directly related to the outbreak are considered federally allowable. These costs should be charged to the accounts to which they would have been allocated had the trip or event occurred. This procedure applies to all fund sources and we anticipate that these expenses will be considered allowable on federal grants and contracts.

We will need to be able to report on the overall expense impact to the agency on these types of expenditures. In order to accomplish this, a notation of “**C19**” should be referenced with any expenses related to this type of cancellation.

- In AggieBuy, invoices should include “**C19**” in report reference A.
- In Concur, for both Payment and Travel expense reports, include “**C19**” in FAMIS REF A field at the line item level. Also, on travel expense reports, in the business purpose field, please start the field with “**C19**”.

For additional questions, please contact Gwen Marucci at (979) 845-4748 or [gwenc@tamu.edu](mailto:gwenc@tamu.edu) or Jay Avila at (979) 845-6147 or [jay.avila@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jay.avila@ag.tamu.edu).

### **Messaging**

It is important that our media messages be consistent as we go through this period. If you receive media requests, please direct those requests to Blair Fannin, associate director for communications, [blair.fannin@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:blair.fannin@ag.tamu.edu). Additional information on COVID-19 is available at [texashelp.tamu.edu](http://texashelp.tamu.edu).

### **Blair L. Fannin**

Associate Director of Extension Communications

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