

AGRICULTURE / WEIGHTS & MEASURES



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Fred Crowder

Agricultural Commissioner
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To: Agriculture, Weights and Measures Industry, Growers, and Community

From: Fred Crowder, Agricultural Commissioner, Sealer of Weights and Measures

Date: March 17, 2020

Regarding: County Health Officers Order, and Agricultural Production, Direct Marketing, Crop Transportation and Structural Pest Control Services

On March 16, 2020, in response to the threat of the COVID-19 virus, the County Health Officer, released a Shelter at Home Order, which may be reviewed at "smcgov.org".

The order specifies that individuals "shelter at their place of residence" with exemptions for "*receiving certain essential services, or engage in certain essential activities, and work for essential governmental services*". Initial reaction was that this order would impact agricultural and structural operations, however, there are exemptions specified on Page 4, specifically, subsection f. ii where *groceries, certified farmers' markets, and farm stands...* are identified as "essential business", and subsection f. iii, which identifies *food cultivation, including farming, livestock and fishing* as essential businesses, and subsection ix., which identifies *exterminators*, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences as essential businesses.

Additionally, today Secretary Ross also deemed food production, food processing, and food distribution as "essential functions" as well. The Secretary's statement may be viewed on CDFA's "Planting Seeds" blog. The extent of activities to produce, process and distribute food may not be clear to all, however, farming includes all the elements of production – planting, cultivation, pest control, harvest processing, etc., while ensuring that crops availability to consumers would include packing, transport, sales and other related activities.

While conducting essential business, please be aware of any recommendations of the Health Department and implement processes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 such as sanitation, handwashing, social distancing. Information regarding how to protect yourself and others from COVID-19 may also be found at "smcgov.org".

Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and please contact my office if you have questions.