

COVID-19 Weekly Information Update - July 31 / Mise à jour de la semaine - le 31 juillet

Hello,

We would like to send you a few updates regarding COVID-19 and ask you to share this information in your networks. Please continue to consult the [AAFC website](#) regularly for updates.

1. **CFIA statement on unrequested packages of seeds**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is investigating reports of [individuals receiving unsolicited packages of seeds](#) and has advised to not plant seeds from unknown origins. Unauthorized seeds could be the seeds of invasive plants, or carry plant pests, which can be harmful when introduced into Canada. These species can invade agricultural and natural areas, causing serious damage to our plant resources.

If you receive a seed package that you did not order, please contact your [regional CFIA office](#) immediately. Keep the seeds and packaging, including the mailing label, until a CFIA inspector contacts you with further instructions.

2. **BC Food & Beverage (BCFB) - Protecting Our People program: NOW LAUNCHED NATIONALLY**

To help the food industry, BC Food & Beverage (BCFB) has launched the [Protecting Our People \(POP\) program](#) which provides access to PPE available for purchase online. The program is now offered nationally. Companies from the entire food supply chain within Canada, including agriculture, fish harvesters, food processing (including seafood processors) industry, and independent retail grocers, are now eligible to purchase PPE from this buying group.

BCFB created the POP program to help small to medium sized enterprises in the food supply chain to have better access to affordable PPE at a relatively competitive price, similar to what larger companies are able to obtain through bulk purchases. BCFB procures supplies such as masks, gowns, and gloves from reliable, established suppliers with a demonstrated ability to provide quality supplies at competitive prices, as well as the ability to physically inspect orders at the manufacturers and again when arriving in Canada to ensure the quality is suitable for our industry.

The [PPE Ordering Form](#) is now open for orders from across the country. The ordering form requires companies to register an account using a Company name, email address, and creating a password. This information allows BCFB to verify that a buyer meets the eligibility requirements of being a Canadian agri-food business. A [User Guide](#) has been created for the ordering form with step by step instructions, if required.

The POP Program is being delivered by BC Food & Beverage and is funded by the Government of BC through programs delivered by the Investment Agriculture Foundation of B.C. The order fulfilment and customer service are provided by Evolution Fulfilment. Should you have further questions, you may contact BCFB at bcbf@evolvewithus.ca or at 604-940-2228 ext. 223

3. **Government of Canada invests in measures to boost protections for Temporary Foreign Workers and Address COVID-19 Outbreaks on Farms**

The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, [announced today](#) that the Government of Canada is taking additional action to reduce the incidence and impact of COVID-19 outbreaks on farms. With an investment of \$58.6 million, the Government is strengthening the Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) Program and making further investments to safeguard the health and safety of Canadian and temporary foreign workers from COVID-19, including:

- Investing in supports to temporary foreign workers, including direct outreach to workers delivered through migrant worker support organizations;
- Strengthening the employer inspections regime; and
- Investing to improve health and safety on farms and in employee living quarters.

The Government will also work to develop mandatory requirements to improve employer-provided accommodations, focusing on ensuring better living conditions for workers.

Thank you,

Industry Engagement Division
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Government of Canada