



May 12, 2020

Agricultural Education

Advisory for COVID-19 and School Learning Laboratories

Given that Agricultural Education programs have lab facilities, many with living organisms (both animals and plants) the following recommendations should help provide support for operating and maintaining the well-being of those organisms.

Animal Science Laboratory Facilities

1. The Agricultural Education instructor(s) or designee should have access to the animal science facility at all times if there are live animals present.
 - Given the time of year, Agricultural Education programs have their students conducting their Supervised Agricultural Education (SAE) livestock projects.
 - The livestock in the facility are on a strict nutritional diet, being fed twice a day. This schedule should be maintained for optimum health, performance and growth of that animal as well as the cleaning of the facility/housing area.
 - The Agricultural Education teacher(s) need to have access to the facility for vaccination, tagging and weighing of livestock. The teacher(s) need to conduct other important supervision responsibilities to include the ability to do preventative medicine and weight management of the SAE for the county fair(s).
2. A plan should be developed to allow access by essential students or designee if needed.
 - Many students house their livestock project(s) at the school facility because they do not have resources to keep an animal at their home. There are not options for these SAE livestock projects to be relocated with the student.
 - Many school farms have a large number of animals that the Agricultural Education instructor(s) assist the students in taking care of, to include routine management practices.
 - A limit should be placed on the number of students accessing the lab facility at one time. Our recommendation would be no more than ten people in the lab facility at a time (including the instructor). All individuals should have no close contact while adhering to the recommended space/distance from each individual. All individuals should leave the area as soon as the work is done.

- A schedule that includes time limits for students based on necessity must be developed with the Agricultural Education teacher(s).
- Biosecurity must be in place for the lab facility that includes at minimum hand sanitation upon arrival and exit, along with biosecurity measures for shoes upon arrival and exit.

Plant Science Laboratory Facilities (Greenhouses)

1. The Agricultural Education instructor(s) should have access to the greenhouse and other plant science facilities if there are live plants present.
 - Given the time of year, Agricultural Education programs are in the middle of spring plant sale season and peak production in greenhouse facilities. While all greenhouse facilities are climate controlled electronically, there are always issues that can arise that demand someone to be present to address. We recommend instructors utilizing the electronic monitoring and controls available through smart technology at this time to operate the basic functions of the greenhouse, if possible/available to the instructor(s).
 - In some situations, the Agriculture Instructor manages the plant science facility. This could include vineyards, orchards, row crops, etc. In these instances, it is important that cultural practices continue to minimize the harmful effects on the plants as well as to maximize the production of the crop.
2. A plan should be developed to allow access by essential students or designee if needed.
 - Given the time of year, there is a considerable amount of labor required to transplant plants that have already been started, potting plants for continued optimal growth, and maintaining optimal nutritional needs for the plants. Much of this labor requirement has a very short window of time to complete for optimum plant growth.
 - A limit should be placed on the number of students accessing the greenhouse at one time. Our recommendation would be no more than ten people in the greenhouse facility at a time (including the instructor). All individuals should leave the area as soon as the work is done.
 - Biosecurity must be in place for the lab facility that includes at minimum hand sanitation upon arrival and exit, along with biosecurity measures for shoes upon arrival and exit.
 - A plan should be developed for transitioning in-person spring plant sales to an alternative method of online ordering and pick-up.

Shop Laboratory Facilities

1. The Agricultural Education instructor(s) should have access to facilities where students have engineering projects.
 - Given the time of year, Agricultural Education programs are in the middle of completing various construction projects. Many of these projects are a major component of the students grade and, in most instances, solely financed by the student. These students either have a buyer for their project or will be attempting to display the project at some show in order to stimulate interest from potential buyers.
2. A plan should be developed to allow access by essential students to complete the work on the construction projects.
 - A limit should be placed on the number of students accessing the shops at one time. Our recommendation would be no more than ten people in the facility at a time (including the instructor). All individuals should leave the area as soon as the work is done.
 - Biosecurity must be in place for the lab facility that includes at minimum hand sanitation upon arrival and exit, along with biosecurity measures for shoes upon arrival and exit.
 - A plan should be developed for transitioning in-person project sales to an alternative method of online ordering and pick-up.