




March 20, 2020

TO: FSIS-Regulated Establishment Facility Management and FSIS Field Employees

FROM: Dr. Philip Bronstein, Assistant Administrator 

SUBJECT: USDA Guidance on COVID-19 Health Questionnaires

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) seeks a united effort with our industry partners in preventing the spread of COVID-19 while continuing to produce safe food for consumers. We provide this updated guidance to our industry partners in accordance with the President's March 13, 2020 Proclamation declaring a National Emergency, the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control both declaring that COVID-19 is a pandemic, and the Office of Management and Budget March 17, 2020 Guidance, [“Federal Agency Operational Alignment to Slow the Spread of Coronavirus COVID-19”](#). COVID-19 remains a fluid situation, and thus, USDA will continue to monitor and implement Federal government and applicable public health authorities' guidance and may revise the following accordingly.

During this pandemic, industry employees may orally ask USDA employees questions concerning COVID-19 prior to allowing entrance into the facility. USDA permits industry to orally ask the following:

- If the USDA employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including shortness of breath, body aches, coughing, and fever of over 100.4.
- If someone living in the USDA employee's household or someone the USDA employee is caring for has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or had any recent contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- In the last 14 days, if the USDA employee, someone living in the USDA employee's household, or someone with whom the USDA employee has been in close or frequent contact with, or someone the USDA employee is caring for, returned from, or made a travel connection through a CDC Level 3 or Level 2 country or State Department Level 3 or Level 4 country, for example, China, Korea, Japan, the European Union, Iran.
- Industry may also measure a USDA employee's temperature via a digital forehead thermometer before permitting entry into the facility.

USDA employees will only respond to questions orally and will not sign any attestations or submit any written questionnaires.

The industry has the authority to determine whether to permit or deny entry into its facility should a USDA employee answer in the affirmative to any of the above questions. The industry may retain a record of USDA employees that are both permitted or denied entrance. However, the industry may not retain any confidential or medical information associated with any USDA employee's response.

We thank you for your continued commitment to protecting the health and safety of all our employees during this difficult time.