



SHARING VEGETABLE PRODUCTION EQUIPMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The US Department of Homeland Security has recognized food and agriculture as a [critical infrastructure industry](#) for national security during the COVID-19 pandemic. As essential agricultural workers, farmers should employ precautions when working with shared agricultural machinery and equipment. Below are some recommendations:

- Prepare and possess a [Notice of Essential Food and Agricultural Employee Work Authorization Form](#) issued and signed by Steve Troxler, N.C. Commissioner of Agriculture.
- Follow all [CDC guidelines](#) and stay home, if you do not feel well.
- Practice social distancing with other workers if practical and possible.
 - The virus spreads mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet), through respiratory droplets produced by coughing or sneezing of an infected person.



- Wear gloves to work. Always wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing gloves, and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with gloves or unwashed hands.
 - The virus may [persist on surfaces](#) for a few hours on copper, 24 hours on cardboard, and up to 2 to 3 days on plastic and stainless steel. Individuals may have an increased chance to be infected when they touch their own mouth, nose, or possibly eyes after touching a contaminated surface.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Before using the shared equipment, clean them with water first if applicable (add liquid soap if available), then sanitize the equipment with one of the EPA [approved disinfectants](#) for SARS-CoV-2. Follow the label of the disinfectant. Pay special attention to surfaces people will likely have touched when loading/unloading or operating the equipment, such as handles and steel wheels. An example is given below for a plastic mulch layer showing the “hot spots”. If you do not have an EPA approved disinfectant, use one of the following [options](#).
 - Use a disinfectant with at least 70% alcohol to sanitize all hot spots.
 - Use a household bleach solution: mix 5 tablespoons (one third cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. After sterilization, rinse the equipment with clean water to avoid erosion by the bleach.

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ARROWS POINT TO POSSIBLE HOT SPOTS



Rain-Flo Plastic Mulch Layer 345FL from Elite Metal Tools

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