



## GENERAL MESSAGE

16 March 2020

### CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) - Update

This ALFA General Message includes updated information announced by the Federal Government since the previous message sent to ALFA members on 4 March 2020. It also includes suggestions and practical things you can do to help manage the risk and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a human respiratory illness. Symptoms range from a mild cough to pneumonia. There is evidence that it spreads from person to person. Like a flu, good hygiene can prevent infection. Importantly, current government advice indicates there is no evidence that livestock or companion animals/pets such as dogs, cats can be infected with the virus.

#### **Review your Biosecurity Plan and ensure staff understand procedures**

Feedlots should review their Biosecurity Plan and reinforce the feedlot's biosecurity measures with all staff.

#### **Good hygiene and preventative measures**

Everyone on the feedlot should practice good hygiene to protect against infections.

Practicing good hand hygiene and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses:

- No handshaking. Practice social distancing – 1.5 metres is the recognised distance
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, drinking and after going to the toilet
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a handkerchief, tissue or a flexed elbow (not hands), dispose of tissues, and use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser or wash hands regularly with soap
- If unwell, self-isolate and avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact)
- Avoid contact with anyone who has the following symptoms - fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea or diarrhoea.

**IF STAFF ARE FEELING UNWELL AND EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS (FEVER, COUGH, SORE THROAT, SHORTNESS OF BREATH) THEY SHOULD SELF ISOLATE AND SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION**

Practical things you can do to manage the risk of COVID-19 spread include, but are not limited to:

- Communicate often with your staff about your hygiene and biosecurity expectations
- Ensure all staff take action when feeling unwell or have symptoms - [self isolate](#), seek medical attention, and communicate with feedlot management
- Ensure all staff strictly follow the good hygiene preventative measure outlined above
- Ensure all staff understand and practice [social distancing](#) – 1.5 metres, no handshaking
- Encourage open communication between staff and management to encourage disclosure when someone is feeling unwell or is experiencing symptoms

- Separate office desks to ensure there is enough room between staff. If spare rooms are available, consider spreading staff out
- Consider an outdoor shaded area for staff to have food – rather than the designated lunchroom. Stagger lunch, tea breaks so that staff do not all eat together.
- Ensure alcohol-based hand sanitiser and/or antibacterial soap is available to staff at key points through the workplace (such as toilet amenities, wash areas, in transport points such as in the Feedtruck, office spaces, at gates, utes etc).
- Put in procedures to ensure / encourage staff to wash hands.
- Put up signage in key areas – there are some useful posters on [prevention](#) and [symptoms](#).
- Establish ‘washdown’ procedures for key equipment that is used by multiple people in any one shift and/or between shifts. Examples include the feed truck. This might include having drivers wipe down the steering wheel, controls with alcohol-based hand sanitiser between uses.

### **Staff rostering**

- Consider the spread of skills across your employees - Where possible roster staff based on autonomous skillset groups and keep these groups apart to minimise the risk and increase your contingency capability.
- Ensure staff minimise physical contact with each other and proactively conduct social distancing.

### **Staff resourcing and contingency planning**

- The National Feedlot Accreditation Scheme (NFAS) requires feedlots to have contingency plans in place. Feedlots should consider their staff resourcing and business continuity contingency plans considering the emerging COVID-19 issue.
- Seriously consider staff resourcing contingencies and have a plan in place.

Practical things you can consider when assessing and building a plan to manage the risk of COVID-19 include, but are not limited to:

- Assess staff with potential health vulnerabilities (age, pre-existing health issues) – do they require a specific management plan
- Assess staff needs and resourcing under a hypothetical scenario that some services may be shut down in the community. Examples include schools which may require parents to be off work to provide childcare
- Consider work from home ability and capability (IT resources) for some staff functions/ positions
- Consider different scenarios and resulting staffing levels required to operate the feedlot at business as usual levels; or alternative business approaches if staffing levels cannot be maintained due to absenteeism in the short, medium and longer term
- Consider contingency plans to maintain Animal Welfare requirements

### **Screening visitors**

- Consider screening and deferring non-essential Visitors/Contractors/Customers/Suppliers to the feedlot facility based on their travel history (since 1st January 2020) and/or risk profile.
- Consider deferring visitors who have recently travelled to countries that the Federal Government has placed travel bans on or consider to be higher risk being: Mainland China, Iran, Italy, South Korea.
- **NOTE** that on 15 March 2020 the Australian Government announced that ALL travellers to Australia will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

### **Be mindful of where your staff may have travelled**

- Be aware of where staff have travelled and implement restrictions where advised.

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## International Travel

- On Friday 13 March, the Australian Government advised people to reconsider any non-essential international travel.

## What to do if you or your staff contract COVID-19

The Federal Government Health Department advises that if you or your staff are confirmed to have COVID-19, then the infected person needs to isolate themselves to prevent it spreading to other people and follow the prescribed isolation guidance:

- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-isolation-guidance>

## What is ALFA doing?

- ALFA will advise members as relevant new information comes to hand from the Authorities.
- ALFA will continue to engage with the relevant State Government Departments on this issue.
- The safety and welfare of our people is our top priority. ALFA has postponed a number of face-to-face events scheduled over the next 6-week period. These Events will be rescheduled for a later date. Communication will be sent directly to delegates who have registered for these events.

## RESOURCES?

### Federal Department of Health

- <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
- Australian Government's Coronavirus Health Information Line: Phone: 1800 020 080.
- A collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus can be found here: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>
- Latest COVID-19 Health Alerts: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

### Information for Employers

- [https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/02/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers\\_1.pdf](https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/02/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers_1.pdf)

### Information Posters

- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-know-the-signs>
- <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stop-the-spread>

### Health Direct

- <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus#what-is>

### NSW Government Department of Health

- <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

### Local state and territory Health Departments

- <https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments>

### World Health Organisation

- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**NOTE:** *The material in this GENERAL MESSAGE has been compiled from external resources such as State and Federal government sources. It does not constitute legal advice or recommendations and should not be relied upon as such. It is provided in good faith to assist ALFA members. Appropriate legal advice should be sought that reflects your individual circumstances.*