

Thursday, March 11, 2021**To:** CFAES Researchers; Extension Professionals; Chairs & Cabinet**From:** Graham Cochran, Gary Pierzynski, Anne Dorrance, Jackie Kirby-Wilkins, Seth Walker, Ken Scaife

CFAES Research Community,

As we plan and prepare for increased field research this spring, our COVID19 Operations Workgroup is sharing key guidelines and reminders. As usual, these are based on current state and subject to change. We currently assume that research activity will continue as it was in the fall with the major limitation being COVID19 restrictions and safety protocols that limit density in buildings, etc. This also includes coordination of activities in buildings at the lab/building/greenhouse levels to occur to limit densities. Below are a few notes about planning for field research.

Planning for 2021 Field Season Research

Fortunately, investigators will not need to go through an exemption process as we did at the beginning of the 2020 season. However, our capacity is still reduced due to safety practices, cleaning, and social distancing. Density limitations and other health precautions will keep overall activity levels less than under pre-COVID19 conditions. For our ag operations managers, working with COVID safety precautions creates inefficiency and additional work. As you plan research that will occur at research stations, field labs, farms, and animal facilities, please:

- Check in with managers as you plan projects for the upcoming field season, including any project request processes they may have in place.
- Review project procedures with managers to ensure that safety/social distance/mask usage/cleaning are not compromised. (Many procedures were developed last year to protect employees, but new projects may require new solutions).
- Schedule visits in advance and follow check-in procedures when visiting research stations, field labs, farms and animal facilities.

Other important reminders:

- Safety protocols. Keep yourselves and others safe by observing social distance, required mask usage, building density limits, and cleaning.
- Vehicle occupancy – limited to 1 person per vehicle unless otherwise approved. Travel should be limited to one person per vehicle whenever possible. Requests that deviate from this guidance should be directed to Seth Walker (walker.439@osu.edu | 330-263-3665) to assess and provide a recommendation.

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- Hiring exemption process for student employees - start early. Contact your department Human Resources Consultant for guidance.
- Travel approvals – The university has extended restrictions on [domestic and international travel](#) through June 30, 2021. Please review the [CFAES Resource Guide for Business Essential Travel Approval](#). Questions should be directed to the department fiscal officer. More information can be found on the [Business and Finance website](#).
- Please see the [CFAES Return to Offices and Campuses](#) web site for additional information and/or contact our office if you have questions.