

Fact Sheet – April 2020

COVID-19 Alert Level 3 Guidelines



Background

As from midnight 27 April 2020 New Zealand moves from National Alert Level 4 to Alert Level 3 in response to COVID-19. Moving to Alert Level 3 means that all horticulture activities can resume, as long as the same strict health and safety practices as in Level 4 are observed at all times.

Activities permissible include:

- travelling for work but only travel with people in your 'bubble'
- harvesting of olives, including olive harvesting for personal use
- transport to the processor
- processing of olives
- collection of oil from the processor
- contactless ordering and payment and then courier or delivery service of products to customers
- contactless 'click and collect' services, where customers order and pay online or by phone and come and collect their order but with no personal contact.

NOTE – in relation to all of the above mentioned activities the social distancing of maintaining 2 metres must be adhered to.

Currently there is no evidence of foodborne transmission being a significant pathway for the transmission of COVID-19. That is COVID-19 is unlikely to be passed on through fresh food produce. However COVID-19 may survive up to three hours on dry inanimate surfaces, and several hours on hands, tissues and other surfaces, although this depends on the nature of the surface, environmental conditions, etc.

COVID-19 Safety Plan Requirement

Under Alert Level 3 all businesses that are permitted to resume operations, including home-based, need to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan that sets out how they will operate safely. This applies to those businesses that were able to recommence operations under Alert Level 4 that should already have these in place.

The COVID-19 Safety Plan is to ensure that businesses have effective measures in place to protect their people and ensure food safety. Commercial producers and processing plants may look to implement their own (enhanced) measures, typically under the MPI Register for Safe Practice.

Key Facts

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted through food.
- Extra care should be taken with **hygiene and health** to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- Travelling for work is permitted but only **travel with people from your own 'bubble'**.
- Everyone needs to follow the **social distancing requirements** requested by the Government.
- All businesses, including home-based, must have a **COVID-19 Safety Plan**.
- A **Contact Register**, detailing all visitors, must be maintained.

For further information see: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/coronavirus/advice-for-orchards-and-horticultural-industries/advice-for-orchards-and-horticultural-industries-in-level-3/>

All care has been taken in the preparation of this Fact Sheet.

If in doubt check out the Government or MPI websites on COVID-19.

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Olive Grove Checklist

This checklist applies whether a grove is using family, friends, WOOFERS, staff, contract workers, etc. to assist with harvest, as well as for courier drivers and any other visitors. Note there is a request that over 70s stay at home!

Develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan – a good model which you can use is found on the Worksafe website <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/your-covid-19-safety-plan/>

Ensure that visitors to the grove have travelled in their own bubble.

No people allowed on site within 14 days of returning from overseas travel.

Any person who appears visibly ill or has symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, flu like symptoms, gastrointestinal illness MUST be required to leave immediately.

Provision of hand sanitiser and hand washing facility accessible for all people. People are required to sanitise or thoroughly wash their hands when they first arrive and throughout the day.

Promotion of good hand and sneezing/cough hygiene.

No handshakes, hugging, etc.

Keep a distance of at least 2 metres between people where ever possible.

Limit handling and sharing of food, eat outside if possible otherwise open windows and doors for maximum ventilation.

Ensure the strictest hygiene among those preparing shared food and drinks but strongly recommend that people bring their own food and drinks.

Regular cleaning and disinfecting/sanitising of high touch services including but not limited to equipment, crates, transport vehicles, door handles, light switches, floors, walls. People should minimise handling of all of these to a must need basis.

The use of Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves, etc.) should be optional.

Maintain a Contact Register. All visitors must be approved by the grove owner and must sign in via a Register. This Register should contain a declaration that the visitor has not returned from overseas travel within 14 days, has no signs of illness, has not travelled with anyone outside of their bubble and agrees to abide by prescribed hygiene procedures. In addition to the visitor's name, the Register should also include the date, time of arrival/departure and contact details.

Note

The olives still need to be processed as soon as possible after harvest to preserve quality. According to Pablo Canamasas, world renowned expert on olive oil production, harvest → processing time is one of the most important parameters affecting oil quality. Pablo recommends that fruit should be processed within 12 hours of harvesting to avoid quality issues. A delay longer than 24 hours will most likely have an impact on the oil quality. Time delay will result in aerobic and anaerobic fermentations inside the olives which will cause issues with FFA and organoleptic standards, at the least.