



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Department of Plant and Soil Science™

April 1, 2020

TO: Michael Galyean
Provost and Sr Vice President of Academic Affairs

TO: Joseph Heppert
Vice President of Research

THROUGH: William F. Brown
Dean CASNR

FROM: Glen Ritchie
Chair PSS 

Re: DEE Requests

Dear Dr. Galyean and Dr. Heppert,

With the campus on lockdown to prevent additional spread of COVID-19, we also approach our field and greenhouse seasons. Both of you have been very supportive of our research and are aware of the time-sensitive nature of both the greenhouse and field experiments and the need to keep certain materials alive for research. I have instructed all of our faculty, staff, and students to work from home for the duration of the lockdown.

As you are aware, some field operations are required for fundamental research in our department with living plants or equipment that requires oversight to prevent costly damage and loss. As a result, we have requested DEE approval for a minimum number of critical personnel within our department. Even these critical personnel have been instructed to stay home except for mission-critical processes.

The personnel currently include our farm managers, greenhouse managers, and a select group of people who are assigned oversight of sensitive plant material or equipment that requires regular upkeep.

We have instituted the following safety protocols for researchers who come on site:

1. Plan in advance, and minimize your time on-site.
2. Only enter a facility you are authorized to use, and only conduct critical tasks that have a time-sensitive nature or keep sensitive equipment in good repair.
3. Avoid sharing tractors or other equipment that risks passing microbes and is difficult to clean. Clean and sanitize all tools before and after use using a bleach or alcohol solution.
4. Follow additional safety instructions given by farm managers or greenhouse managers overseeing a site.

5. Avoid entering the barns and other facilities unless authorized by the emergency contact point. Refrain from using the restrooms, with the exception of sinks for washing hands.
6. Do not have multiple people in the same room or enclosed space; do not travel together in vehicles, and avoid the shared use of vehicles. Even if you are outside, maintain a minimum six-foot distance from other people, and do not share tools.
7. Wash your hands regularly, do not touch your face, and continue to wear required personal protective equipment (PPE) suitable to production tasks. Do not share PPE.
8. Practice good hygiene. If you or a household member is sick, stay home and inform your supervisor. Disinfect before entering the farm or greenhouse properties, and disinfect again prior to departure. Do not consume food on-site.
9. Never enter farm or greenhouse properties without checking in and checking out with a departmental contact point.

I appreciate your support of PSS, and we would like to emphasize our commitment to minimizing risks to people.

Glen Ritchie
Chair – Plant and Soil Science