

# NFF COVID-19 UPDATE

**16 April 2020**

Welcome to the NFF COVID-19 update, collating recent updates and information relevant to the agrifood supply chain.

You will have noticed we're reducing the frequency of these updates as the volume of new information subsides, but we will continue to bring you updates as needed for the time being.

**We strongly encourage you to forward this brief through your network.**

In addition to this regular brief, we are also maintaining pages on FarmHub with information relevant to farm businesses. Follow the links below to view those pages.

## FarmHub COVID-19 Resources

[Key Information and FAQs](#)

[Border Control Information](#)

[Assistance and Support](#)

[NFF Workplace Guide](#)

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## ESSENTIAL SERVICES SUPPORTING PRIMARY PRODUCTION

The detailed list of essential services and businesses supporting primary production that we developed in consultation with members was considered at a meeting of the Agriculture Senior Officials Committee this afternoon, and subject to any further consideration out of the meeting is now expected to be provided to agriculture ministers. The list outlines the range of services that are needed to ensure continuity of the food and fibre supply chain, and is intended to inform government policy, including implementation of business and border closures by the states and territories.

A FINAL DRAFT list attached is intended to be indicative and can be revised as required.

## BORDER CLOSURES UPDATE

**Queensland**

- [New border restrictions as of 11 April 2020](#). Only Queensland residents, residents of border communities undertaking essential activities and those considered an ‘exempt person’ can cross the border. These restrictions provide for the continuation of essential goods and services for Queenslanders.
- Those engaged in agribusiness continue to be exempt.
- **All existing green Queensland Entry Passes and Queensland Resident Vehicle Passes are void at 12:01am on Saturday, 11 April 2020.**
- All persons entering Queensland must apply for a new Queensland Entry Pass, available [here](#).

#### **New Federal information**

- The Government has prepared an infographic for service providers, government agencies and industries on how to safely access designated remote areas. Available [here](#).

### WORKFORCE UPDATE

#### **Social Distancing and Accommodation Requirements for Transient Workers.**

While the specifics are the responsibility of state and territory governments, the Federal Agricultural Minister has worked with state and territory counterparts to establish consistent principles. The Minister has indicated that these principles will be reported back to National Cabinet this week. That said, it is the responsibility of everyone involved — including councils, employers, and employees — to put in place appropriate measures to meet those requirements (in the context of the local communities and specific workplaces).

#### **Award Changes**

We are continuing to explore possibility of further variations to the Award to assist farms to deal with changes in work patterns and the economic impact of the virus and will provide further information in due course.

### TELECOMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

NBN Co continues to hold weekly roundtables with the Regional, Rural and Remote Communications Coalition, updating members on measures to support connectivity requirements in regional areas and seeking feedback on user needs and challenges. NBN Co is now disclosing data on network usage (available [here](#)), showing an increase of 127% in business hour usage compared to pre-COVID-19 levels. Reports will be issued weekly. The [NBN Co COVID-19 blog](#) provides useful information on connectivity issues and tips for managing your connection.

The Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO) is also providing useful COVID-19 information to consumers at [this site](#), including how to contact your service provider and how the TIO can assist with unresolved complaints and to arrange urgent assistance with connectivity.

### COVID-19 EXPORT CAPITAL FACILITY

The Australian Government has established a \$500 million COVID-19 Export Capital Facility to assist previously profitable Australian exporters whose businesses have been impacted by COVID-19. Exporters will be able to access loans from \$250,000 to \$50 million under the Facility. The Facility will complement other measures announced by the Government which enable banks to support new and existing clients. Exporters should contact their banks in the first instance to determine what assistance may be available to them.

For more information on this announcement, [click here](#).

## MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

### Key Messages

The NFF encourages stakeholders to align where possible with the cross-industry messaging below.

- Australia is one of the most food secure countries in the world, exporting 75% of what we produce.
- The impact of COVID-19 on Australian agriculture is an evolving situation, but it's largely business as usual for farmers and the food supply chain.
- Panic buying by consumers is not necessary, and it's not helpful. There is plenty of food to go around. We just need to shop sensibly.
- The NFF is in ongoing contact with all levels of government, and helping to coordinate the flow of information to and from industry.
- It is critical that all levels of Government recognise agriculture as an essential service, and not restrict the flow of inputs or raw products through the supply chain.

## COMMODITY BRIEFS

RDCs and industry associations are releasing tailored information on COVID19 developments relevant to specific commodities. Links to these are below. Please let us know of others that can be added.

- [WoolProducers Australia](#)
- [Dairy Australia](#)
- [Red Meat Advisory Council](#)
- [Wool Industry – Shearing Operations: Protocols in response to COVID19 – Operations Document](#)
- [GrainGrowers Limited](#)

## KEY CONTACTS AND CONSULTATION FORUMS

NFF is participating in the COVID19 forums listed below. Please forward any questions you would like us to raise in these forums to the following staff:

- Overall coordination: Tony Mahar – ([tmahar@nff.org.au](mailto:tmahar@nff.org.au))
- Labour and workplace issues: Ben Rogers ([brogers@nff.org.au](mailto:brogers@nff.org.au))
- Border Controls: Warwick Ragg ([wragg@nff.org.au](mailto:wragg@nff.org.au))
- Stimulus packages and trade: Pru Gordon ([pgordon@nff.org.au](mailto:pgordon@nff.org.au))
- Farm inputs: Adrienne Ryan ([aryan@nff.org.au](mailto:aryan@nff.org.au))
- FarmHub: Heidi Reid ([hereid@nff.org.au](mailto:hereid@nff.org.au))
- Communications and media: Laureta Wallace ([lwallace@nff.org.au](mailto:lwallace@nff.org.au)) or Charlie Thomas ([cthomas@nff.org.au](mailto:cthomas@nff.org.au))

Forum	Convener	Time/day
NFF/DAWE Coronavirus Teleconference	NFF	Wednesdays, 3.30 - 4.00 pm
NFF Partner Briefing	NFF	Wednesdays, 4.30 – 5.00 pm
Member Communications Group	NFF	Thursdays, 4 - 5pm
NFF Member CEOs Meeting	NFF	Tuesdays, time TBC
Food and Grocery Sector Group	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Mondays 10.30-11.30am
The Agriculture Ministers' Forum (AGMIN)	Council of Australian Governments	Last held Tuesday, 14 April
Labour Forum	Attorney General's Department	
Coronavirus – Industry Consultation	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Wednesdays, 2.00 - 3.00pm
Coronavirus – Industry Consultation	Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment	Next TBC