

B+LNZ & Federated Farmers COVID-19 FAQs (As at 27 March)

Understanding COVID-19:

Find frequently asked questions about the basics of understanding COVID-19, what it means, how it spreads and more, at the bottom of the Government's webpage:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/>

What does it mean that New Zealand has moved to a Level 4 (Eliminate) Alert?

This means that only essential businesses and those that support them can continue to operate. The Government anticipates this level will last for **at least four weeks**.

Learn more about the COVID-19 Alert System on the [Government's website here](#).

Is farming and food producing an "essential service"? What roles are classified as "essential"?

The Ministry for Primary Industries confirms that farmers, processing plants, and key elements of the supply chain that support farming and processors are considered essential services. This includes the provision of services essential to farmers and growers operating their businesses.

The current [description of "essential services" can be found on the Government's website here](#). MPI released a more detailed list of the types of agricultural support services deemed essential. You can view the expanded list [new list here](#).

Primary industries, including food and beverage production and processing:

- Packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products.
- Food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services, food safety and biosecurity functions.
- Veterinary and animal health/welfare services

Essential services listed by MPI: (Updated on 25 March)

- Livestock and primary produce transporters
- Veterinary service providers
- Feed/Fodder transporters
- Feed and supplement manufacturers, processors, suppliers and stores
- Manufacturers and distributors of animal medicines
- Pet shops and services (for delivery only, or to care for animals kept in store)
- Marine farming hatcheries, and suppliers of gear used in marine farms and fishing (e.g. ropes, nets, float manufacture, installation and maintenance to maintain marine farm crop lines)
- Animal control
- Workers caring for animals in containment
- Rural contractors who are providing essential services that cannot be deferred over the next 4 weeks, especially for animal welfare purposes (artificial insemination technicians; stock agents managing and directing stock movements; winter re-grassing for feed; fertiliser supply and application; shearing where necessary for animal welfare)
- Fertiliser manufacture and distribution

If you are not sure, please call MPI on 0800 00 83 33 or email info@mpi.govt.nz.

Who needs to register?

Essential Businesses with 5 people or more on the business site (including the owner) need to register and a registration form can be found here: <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/covid-19-essential-primary-sector-service-registration/registration-form> by **Friday 5:00pm on Friday 27 March 2020**.

The business will need to answer a number of questions to provide assurances they have a plan and process to manage infection risks.

Businesses that believe they qualify as an “essential service” are able to continue operating while they are going through the registration process.

You do not need to register if the answer is ‘YES’ to both questions below:

- Does your business have 5 or fewer people (including the owner) working at each business site?
- Can you achieve social distancing measures between staff in your workplace, including travelling, to and from work?

If you’re in doubt, register.

Farmers should also encourage their key suppliers to register by the Friday deadline.

What is a business site?

While not defined we suggest that if you have more than one farm where people work or different operations on the same property to seek to isolate them from each other.

What is your NZBN number?

If you have internet access – go to <https://www.nzbn.govt.nz/> and type in your business name in the search bar.

“Registered businesses have been automatically assigned an NZBN. Sole traders, partnerships and trusts can apply to get one via this website”

If you don’t have an NZBN you will also need to Create a “RealMe” login. You will need your IRD Number and other documentation to verify who you are.

For sole traders and partnerships, you will need a driver licence or passport -to enter details.

How can I keep looking after myself, my staff and others around me in self-isolation?

Our sector is fortunate to be able to continue, but with this comes a serious responsibility. It is essential for everyone in the sector to do everything they can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that we can continue to operate.



Please protect your families and your staff. There is more information about how farmers can do this on our [B+LNZ website page here](#).

The next few months will be incredibly challenging. We are conscious that there is drought in parts of the country that farmers are also having to deal with, on top of COVID-19.

It is more important than ever that we look to stay connected, reach out to your neighbours and work out a plan to support each other.

I have some questions about my responsibility as an employer?

Federated Farmers has prepared a helpful factsheet on farmer employer responsibilities, including what to do if your employee is sick or is required to self-isolate – [download the factsheet here](#).

If you have employees from overseas who may normally be planning a trip home at this time of the year, think through the implications of travel restrictions and how you may be able to support them to keep in touch with family remotely.

What are the rules around physical distancing in my business?

The Ministry of Health (MOH) says that the purpose of self-isolation is to maintain physical distance between people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 and others who may not have. Therefore, all workplaces are required distancing of at least 2 metres between staff at each business site can be achieved—including travelling, to and from work. Production chains must achieve these limits of separation. (Those with 5 (five) or fewer people working on a business site must register if they cannot ensure these social distances can be maintained).

What about contractors coming onto the farm?

Contractors should **only** be coming on farm for essential work that cannot be delayed until the end of the lockdown period. They can come on farm if you can keep 2 metre physical distancing. Contractors should be able to arrive on their own, do the job without you being close and leave without contact – use the phone to give instructions.

You should maintain a registry of visitors, name, time and place to enable trace back if necessary.

At this stage, individual shearing contractors are in the process of registering, but you should check to make sure with any contractors needed on your farm in the next four weeks.

The Fencing Contractors Association has stated that do not consider themselves an essential service.

Further guidelines from Ministry of Health

What does COVID-19 mean for farmers and their workers with regard to hygiene?

Farmers and their workers should follow the advice of the Ministry of Health with regard to keeping good hygiene standards, including washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes. Please visit the Ministry of Health advice [here](#).

Currently there is no evidence animals (pets or livestock) can spread COVID-19. It is unlikely that COVID-19 can be transmitted through food, and there isn't evidence to date of this happening.

What precautions should farmers take if staff are ill?

Like other businesses, farmers should ensure staff who are ill with COVID-like symptoms do not work. Report the situation to the Healthline or local GP. Please telephone – do not arrive in person. Self-isolation should take place or be continued.

Please see the advice [here](#).

What if one of my farm workers is diagnosed with coronavirus?

As above, that person should seek medical help where required and be registered with the local GP and/or Healthline. They should be kept away from other farm workers.

What help is available for farmers?

The Government has launched a wage subsidy and leave payment scheme to help employers. Please see information [here](#).

For information regarding continuity, animal welfare and labour needs farmers should talk to their key sector groups, including [Rural Support Trusts](#), [Beef + Lamb New Zealand](#), [DairyNZ](#), your dairy company or co-op and [Federated Farmers](#).

The Rural Support is also always available on 0800 787 254.

MPI is closely monitoring farmer welfare through its response to dry conditions around the country and the COVID-19 response. Animal welfare is also closely being monitored through the drought response. MPI is talking regularly to sector leaders about how best to meet farmer needs.

