

NYCAMH Wants to Make Farmers Aware of COVID-19 Risk Factors

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The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) would like to make farmers aware of the unique factors that may put them at increased risk of serious illness should they contract COVID-19. Even though most farmers in New York live outside the major 'hot-spot' areas, there is still reason to be vigilant about social distancing, handwashing, and using fabric face coverings in public. COVID-19 positive patients have been reported in [every single](#) New York State county. While some people experience little to no symptoms though they have COVID-19, people who are older, have asthma, are men, or have underlying health conditions are at increased risk of severe illness.

NYCAMH research published in 2015¹ showed that Upstate New York farmers (men) had an increased rate of asthma and uncontrolled chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) over their rural male neighbors. No surprise, the latest Census of Agriculture² also shows our farmers are growing older, and the majority of those in farming are still men, who are at higher risk. While farmers are so often willing to take care of everyone else first, please don't ignore the important symptoms of COVID-19. If you begin to experience fever, dry cough, headaches, or shortness of breath contact your primary healthcare provider. You can also contact the NYS Department of Health COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-364-3065. COVID-19 testing is free in New York State.

Need advice on how to cope with the flood of changes that COVID-19 has brought to your family, business and workers? Contact NYCAMH at 1-800-343-7527 or visit our COVID-19 website (<https://www.nycamh.org/covid-19/>) where we can help with stress management through our [Farm Partners Program](#), personal protective equipment (PPE) and alternatives, [virtual farm safety trainings](#), and safety grants through the [John May Farm Safety Fund](#).

1. Earle-Richardson G, Scribani M, Scott E, May J, Jenkins P. A comparison of health, health behavior, and access between farm and nonfarm populations in rural New York state. *J Rural Health*. 2015;31(2):157-164.
2. Census of Agriculture. USDA; 2017. https://www.nass.usda.gov/Quick_Stats/CDQT/chapter/1/table/1. Accessed December 11, 2019.