Guidance for Detasseling Companies and Workers to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 Virus

It is important to institute protocols to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of detasseling workers. Under these guidelines, workers need to implement improved personal health practices to slow the spread of the virus. These practices include keeping at least six feet between each person, coughing and/or sneezing into elbows, washing hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds, and refraining from touching the face, nose, and eyes.

Governor Ricketts has issued a Directed Health Measure (DHM) for all Nebraska counties that further restricts activities. Detasseling activities are expected to follow the DHM in effect. The DHM’s can be found online at www.governor.nebraska.gov.

Protocols for the following situations should be developed.

General Screening and Sanitation
1. Maintain 6 feet physical distancing, as much as possible, in all circumstances.
2. Wear masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
3. Utilize protocols of screening questionnaires for health symptoms or temperature checks (per CDC and OSHA must be under 100.4).
4. Easy access to multiple hand wash and sanitization stations.
5. Frequent disinfecting of restrooms, buses, eating and other common areas.
6. Educate and train workers about how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Transportation
1. Assigned seating. Family members may sit together.
2. Fill bus from back to front.

In Field Operations
1. Masks are not required unless 6 feet spacing is not possible. Please work with individuals experiencing issues with a particular type of mask to find a solution that is comfortable and still protects their health.
2. If there are common areas for additional water or drinks, use only disposable cups. Consider designating one person, with proper PPE, to refill water jugs.
3. Plenty of receptacles for trash to keep the fields clean.
4. Individual hand sanitizers for workers to use when away from common stations.

Meals & Breaks
1. Each person brings their own meals and water.
2. If there are common areas for additional water or drinks, use only disposable cups. Consider designating one person, with proper PPE, to refill water jugs.
3. Plenty of receptacles for trash to keep the fields clean.
4. Individual hand sanitizers for workers to use when away from common stations.

What to do if someone is sick
1. Individuals who appear to have symptoms upon arrival or who become sick during the day should be immediately separated and sent home.
2. If an individual is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform anyone they have come into contact with including fellow workers.
3. Employers should work with state, local, tribal and/or territorial health officials to identify potential exposed employees.
4. Employees exposed to COVID-19, but without symptoms, may continue to work. Additional monitoring and screening by supervisors should occur throughout the work day.