



**Dear APSA Members,**

Recently, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global pandemic. This declaration has forced many countries into lockdowns as well as enforcing travel restrictions to limit the spread of the disease due to human to human transmissions across various countries. While these measures are necessary at this time, they may potentially impact food and nutritional security. Thus, it is important that the food delivery channels and agriculture input supply can still remain open in every country.

Seed is an origin of food supply chain and the season for the production cannot be delayed as it can create a big impact to farmers to secure their living. Therefore, it is very important to get full support from the government (the Department of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture) to ensure that all services like laboratory testing and phytosanitary certificate will remain open. The international movement of seeds as well as agriculture input will not be affected nor will they be subjected to unauthorized roadblocks.

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis in China, the central and local governments issued a [policy](#) to ensure the stable supply of food products and agricultural production materials. The government also released a [stimulus package](#) to effectively support the stability of production and supply of agricultural products.

APSA has recently checked with the Department of Agriculture in Thailand and we were reassured that all services are to remain open as normal and all agriculture input including seed shipment will not be affected. We have also received recent updates from PSIA that there will be no impact on seed movement recently in the Philippines, referring to below link;

<http://www.da.gov.ph/da-expects-seamless-unhampered-movement-of-food-agri-products-in-luzon-wide-quarantine/>

APSA would also like to share references to help your company and customers to ensure on food safety and adopt the WHO guideline on daily seed production and operations. Below are the communication guidelines for your customers and employees;

1. There is no evidence to date that the Coronavirus can pass through food and seeds. Cooked food is recommended as the virus can be killed by heat treatment of at least 30 minutes at 60 Celsius degrees (ref <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/coronavirus-no-evidence-food-source-or-transmission-route>)

2. The transmission of Covid-19 is usually transmitted from human to human and there is very low risk that the virus can be transmitted through the surface of packaging during transportation. Therefore the people who work in the field or in operations, the World Health Organization (WHO) standard recommendation is advised as followed: (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>) ;
- proper hand hygiene
  - cough/cold hygiene practices
  - Use appropriate PPE (mask and hand sanitizer)
  - safe food practices
  - avoiding close contact, when possible, with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing

As business owners and/or managers, please ensure that the correct facilities are provided onsite (hand washing sanitizers, PPE) and ensure that your staff are trained appropriately according to the hygienic practices. Please continue to keep monitoring your staff are fit to work and so not have any symptoms of the virus.

In case you have received any news from your country in regards to the impact on seed movement due to the virus, please do not hesitate to get back to me directly at ([may@apsaseed.org](mailto:may@apsaseed.org)). We hope all of you stay safe and healthy.

Thank you very much.



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Asia and Pacific Seed Alliance