

# A Survey to Discover COVID-19 Safety Measures for Fresh Citrus Agricultural Workers and Training Needs

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**Introduction:** The UF/IFAS Fresh Fruit training team of the Indian River growing region educate hundreds of agricultural workers each year in food safety, personal hygiene, worker protection standards (WPS) and citrus disease identification. The corona virus will dramatically impact methodology previously used to train workers and the safety procedures in packinghouses and field operations.

## Objectives/Purpose:

- 1) Determine the level of corona virus concern within the industry.
- 2) Identify what protective measures are being implemented or will be implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among workers.

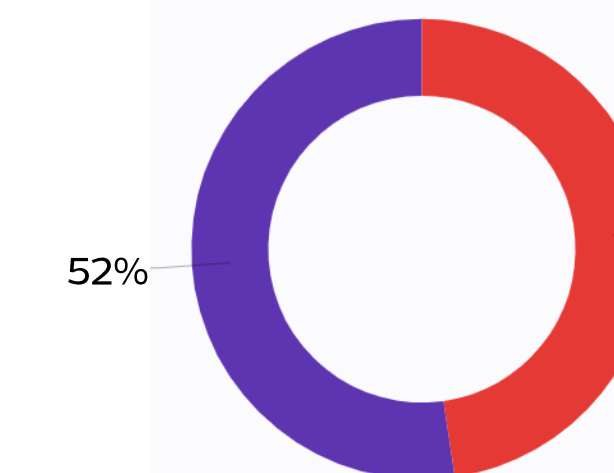
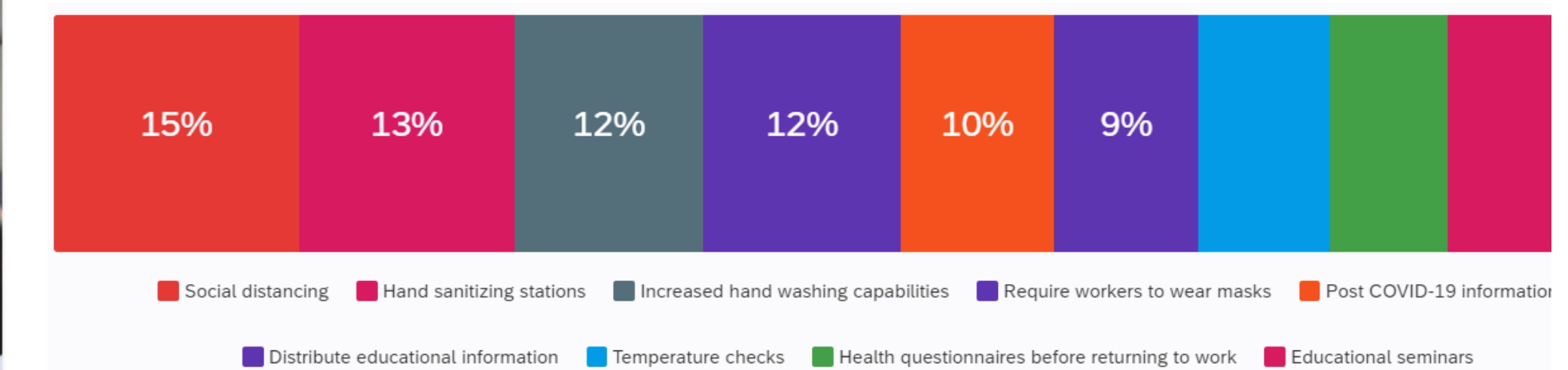
**Methods:** An eleven-question survey was developed for citrus growers, producers and packinghouse managers to understand the current state of corona virus infection at their workplace and safety measures they have, or will, institute to educate and protect agricultural workers. Other questions asked about their ability to source and purchase informational material and safety equipment. They were also asked if they would like UF/IFAS personnel to educate workers on the corona virus and how to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19. This survey was released in the last week of June 2020 and was open for 6 weeks for responses. The survey was publicized statewide via various electronic venues.



**Results/Discussion:** Of 93 respondents, 64% stated that they were “extremely” or “moderately” concerned about the possible spread of the corona virus at their place of work or business. 25% reported that employees at their place of work (including office and field workers) had already had the disease. Close to 50% reported some sort of hinderance for workers to get tested from a “lack of available tests” to “did not know where to go” and “was afraid to get tested”. When questioned about new safety measures put into place, 68% stated that the availability of hand sanitizer had increased and 52% said that face coverings were now required.

## Two Sample Questions & Responses

For workers that return in the fall, what safety measures are anticipated to be put in place to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19? Check all that apply.



Are you, or your employer, finding it difficult to source safety material (masks, sanitizer, non-touch thermometer, educational information) for workers?

**Conclusions:** As a result of the information gathered, team members will be able to adjust the training program to include additional information about the corona virus and how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They will also be able to better protect themselves and participants knowing what safety measures have been adopted at training locations.



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