



COVID-19 SAFETY: U-PICK BERRY GUIDELINES FOR GROWERS

With these simple steps berry farms can safely allow U-PICK operations to occur. These procedures aim to minimize the spread of COVID-19 person to person by maintaining physical distancing between berry workers & customers and limiting the number of berry workers & customers on the farm.

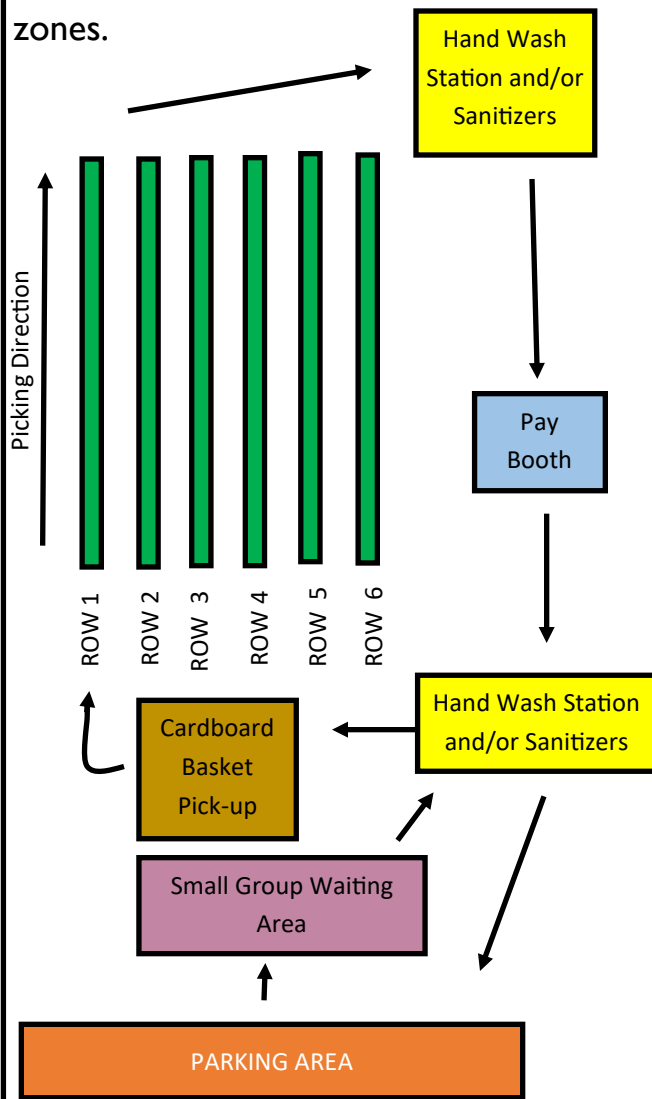
CFIA states that there is currently no evidence that food or food packages can be a source or route of transmission of the virus. Therefore it is safe to provide cardboard picking boxes or have customers bring own clean 4L pails.

1. YOU are responsible to implement measures to ensure that people coming to your farm are reasonably able to maintain a physical separation of at least 2 meters (**use on-farm signage**). You will need to look at your current practices and revise them as required in order to comply with this requirement (see Figures 1&2).
2. You may need to LIMIT the number of customers allowed in the field or on your property based on your ability to maintain physical distancing from other PRE-PICK & U-PICK customers and staff. May need to mark out spaces.
3. Depending on how busy your farm is and your ability to manage social distancing on your farm you may choose to go to an APPOINTMENT ONLY system. Growers can use the NEW scheduling program available on www.pfga.com or your own system (i.e. phone, e-mail, etc.) best suited to your operation size.
4. COMMUNICATE with customers when making an appointment and with **on-farm signage** not to visit farm if showing COVID-19 symptoms or have been in contact with anyone found to be positive.
5. Provide handwashing stations and/or sanitizer to customers entering and leaving field – water can be any temperature, liquid soap preferred, single use towels, it's the physical action of hand washing that removes any pathogens.
6. Take customers separately to picking zone maintaining a directional route (see Figures 1&2)– workers could carry 2 metre rulers (like a long hockey stick) to measure out physical distancing.
7. Have customers pick in alternative rows to maintain physical distancing- Remind customers to stay in assigned row.
8. CUSTOMERS NOT ALLOWED TO EAT BERRIES IN THE FIELD (COVID-19 transmission concern)
9. Encourage e-transfers or debit machine transactions and minimize handling of cash– employees and customers should hand sanitize after every transaction. Can also install a plastic shield at the transaction table to protect workers and customers (similar to grocery stores set-up) and/or set-up 2m distance between customers and staff at time of transaction (i.e. debit machine attached to pole).
10. DISINFECT SURFACES ON A REGULAR BASIS– railings, doorknobs, washrooms, table/ counter surfaces with household cleaners or diluted bleach (Public Health Agency of Canada recommends 1 part bleach to 9 parts water (for bleach containing 5% sodium hypochlorite)).
11. Communicate to your customers the *MB Berry U-Pick COVID-19 Guidelines for Customers* (see pdf).



SAFE BERRY U-PICK PRACTICES

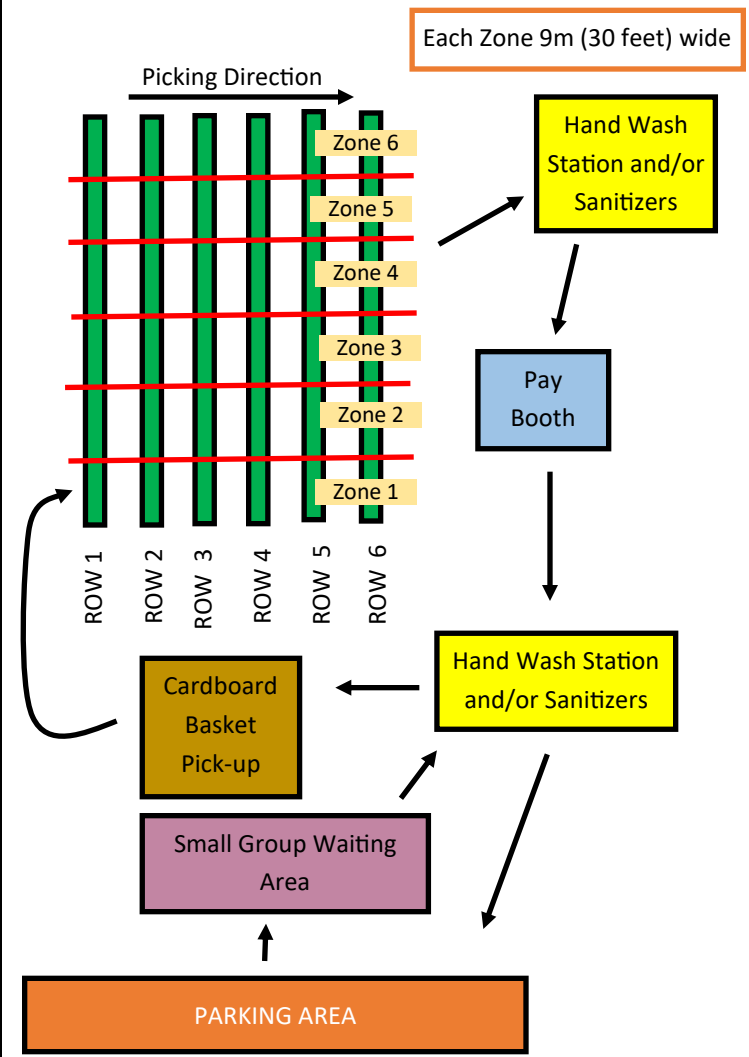
Figure 1: Divide berry field into row zones.



PROS: Easy layout, customers in alternating rows, can be used with any berry crop in rows.

CONS: Less customers at a time. Use coloured/ numbered sticks to mark out picked rows.

Figure 2: Divide strawberry/ tree fruit field into block zones.



PROS: More customers at a time, customers in alternating zones.

CONS: Moving across rows, flagging tape may be needed to mark out zones. Works for strawberries or non-hedge tree fruit.

Modified version of original figures developed by and used with permission of Dr. Mark Hoffman, NC State Extension, NCSU.

<https://Strawberries.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/03/covid-19-daily-farmers-and-strawberry-update-3-29-2020/>