

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
SEPTEMBER 7, 2020

Foster Farms Livingston Plant Allowed to Reopen

MERCED COUNTY, CA – The Merced County Department of Public Health (Department) announces that the Livingston Plant at Foster Farms, in Livingston, has met the requirements to reopen as directed in the Health Officer Order (Order) as of September 7, 2020 at 9:30 p.m. A small maintenance crew may enter the facility at 3:30 p.m. The Order included numerous directives beyond the Livingston Plant shutdown, and will remain in place until all of the requirements are met to the satisfaction of the Health Officer, Dr. Salvador Sandoval.

Before reopening the Livingston Plant, the Order required:

- 1) All employees allowed within the Livingston Plant have received two negative COVID-19 tests, no more than seven (7) days apart;
- 2) Significant changes be made to all Livingston Complex (Complex) break spaces and areas of potential congregation (e.g., time card stations) to ensure adequate social distancing of all workers on the plant;
- 3) All facilities in the complex to undergo an extensive third-party deep cleaning, and
- 4) Safety training and communications provided to employees in English, Spanish, and Punjabi.

Foster Farms has completed all of these items to the satisfaction of the Department. The Department will continue to perform site visits at the Complex to ensure established mitigation efforts continue, and will be working closely with Foster Farms until the entire Complex is cleared from outbreak protocol.

“The Department is pleased to see that our intervention led to significant improvements for the testing positivity rate among employees at the Foster Farms facilities,” said Dr. Salvador Sandoval, Merced County Public Health Officer. “All workers are starting with a clean slate after two negative consecutive tests for COVID-19 within the targeted period of time. We appreciate Foster Farms cooperation and response with addressing the outbreak in order to slow the spread of COVID-19 among their employees. The Department will continue to make the health and safety of Foster Farms employees a priority by closely monitoring the situation at the facility. The Department will not hesitate to intervene again, if it should become necessary.”

As a reminder, it is still a **local and statewide mandate** to wear a cloth face covering inside of, or in line to enter any indoor public space, or when unable to maintain six feet of social distance outside. Merced County health officials strongly recommend that all residents (including business sectors) practice the following safety measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
- Practice social distancing
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- When hand washing is not possible, use hand sanitizer with 60 percent alcohol base
- Stay home and self-monitor if you experience any COVID-19 symptoms (available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

For more information on COVID-19, please visit the Department's resource website at www.countyofmerced.com/coronavirus.

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