

Operations: Essential/Non-essential on ISU Farms

The following plan outlines the operations for the ISU Farms that will be maintained in case of enactment of an essential operations order due to COVID-19. These plans apply to all ISU farms including the ISU Research Farms (central Iowa and outlying locations), Animal Science Farms, Ag 450 Farm, Compost Facility, Committee for Ag Development, FEEL Lab, and other related units. The ISU BioCentury Research Farm has developed its own set of operational guidelines.

The overall goal for the ISU Farms operations during the COVID-19 pandemic is to:

- Ensure core field research operations and assets that are integral to sustained innovation and discovery remain viable and poised to again be fully engaged by university researchers.
- Ensure proper care, protection, and maintenance of ISU Farms buildings, equipment, and assets, with the capacity for the university to rapidly return to full, normal operations when called upon.
- Ensure that administrative, technology and public health and safety support is available for faculty and staff who must work on ISU Farms as well as those working remotely.

Note: In all cases, the first priority is the safety of the ISU staff, faculty, students, and the public. ISU Farms safety protocols are listed at: <https://www.farms.ag.iastate.edu/>

Specifically, the ISU Farms operations plan during the COVID-19 pandemic will consist of:

Animal Care

Animal/livestock care, including feeding, mixing/delivering feed, breeding, parturition, hatching, husbandry, bedding, health care, milking, egg collection, animal identification, plus routine weighing, sorting, transport, and marketing.

Manure Management

Manure management, including manure collection, spreading, pumping, loading, agitation, composting, separation, bedding production, and harvest/collection.

Crop Care

Plant/crop care, including annual crops, perennial crops, cover crops, orchards, vineyards, pastures, woodlands, etc. including planting, tillage, pest management, fertilizing, pruning, harvest, and maintaining crop fields in bulk crops to sustain soil and field status (fertility, weed, insect, disease) for future field integrity for research continuity. Growing crops and forages for grain, livestock feed/forages, and for human food. Includes maintenance of turfgrass research (greens, fairways, sports turf).

Machinery Care

Maintenance and operation of agricultural machinery and equipment, irrigation equipment, including calibrations, repairs, modifications, and minor retrofits, if required.

Facility and Land Care

Maintenance of agricultural structures and infrastructure, including buildings, utilities, waterlines, wells, fences, waterways, terraces, sub-surface drainage, roads, ponds, and research infrastructure critical to future agricultural research. Less frequent mowing lawns, but no detailed trimming.

Research Support in Addition to Specific Trials

Maintenance of unique, long-term continuous field research activities, including crop rotations (one set from the 1950s, for example), water quality studies, and soil fertility plots. These operational activities protect critical, historical, and future-looking research resources and are put at risk if discontinued for one season.

Maintenance of automated remote sensing data collection devices critical for modeling and databases that collect seasonal and climatological information. Examples include weather stations, flow meters, water samplers, etc. These instruments provide key data for web-based models and predictive algorithms.

Germplasm/seed operations, including planting, pollinating, rogueing, and harvest of invaluable, long-term irreplaceable germplasm.

Maintenance of herds or flocks representing invaluable, long-term genetic lines key to future discoveries (e.g., cattle, chickens, pigs, etc.).

Non-Essential Operations on ISU Farms

Construction projects performed by staff

Major overhauls or retrofitting of machinery or facilities

New research infrastructure installations

New enterprises

Planting perennials that can be delayed

Facility maintenance or remodeling that can be delayed

Purchases/sales of machinery, equipment, land

Purchases of livestock unless required for an approved research, teaching, or extension project

Purchases of perennial plant stock (trees, etc.)

Classes, short courses, tours, training sessions

Public events including sales or auctions

Student events of all kinds

Field days and all gatherings including visitors

Private research trials unless approved through the research evaluation process

On-farm trials on private farms that require farm staff visits

Demonstrations including home gardens, shows, etc.

Detailed lawn care

- All questions related to whether field, farm, and agricultural research, demonstrations, events, and related activities should proceed should be directed to Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or his representative.
- Site-specific questions should be directed to the farm manager or farm superintendent.
- Note: All gatherings on farms such as agricultural demonstrations, field days, extension education, or other learning events, displays, tours, and similar activities are canceled.
- Note: Sustaining the ISU farms is mission critical to support ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, ISU Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension, and Iowa's continued worldwide leadership in agricultural production and to ensure a safe, productive U.S. food supply.