



## Impact of Covid-19 on Labor Availability

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### Abstract

Mankind has seen many pandemic's in history and common point of all the pandemic's is their reverse effects on economies. Covid-19 has impacted whole process from the field to the consumer as far as world food system is considered. Covid-19 has restricted movement of workers, changed the demand of the consumers, closed the food production availabilities. There is a lot of disruption, especially for farmers who do not indulge in mechanized work and need huge number of men in their fields. Stable crops are probably to be least effected by following the measures to control the spread of virus, but farmers growing more specialized crops could be effected at large.

**Keywords:** pandemic, field, food, work, staple

### Introduction

COVID-19 is the 5th among pandemic's, after influenza virus (H1N1)1918, influenza virus (H2N2) 1957, influenza virus (H3N2) 1968, and Pandemic flu (H1N1) 2009, that has caused around 50 million, 1.5 million, 1 million, and 300 000 human deaths respectively (Liu et al., 2020). WHO demonstrated that the outbreak of this pandemic is not a crisis related to public health only, but it is a disaster that will take every sector in its lap. Therefore, each sector and each individual should be involved in this domain (WHO, 2020c). However, food domain has faced numerous challenges when compared with different sectors that are not much necessary for daily life like, aviation and tourism during a pandemic's. The Food supply chain can be put into into five phases, which consisted of processing, agricultural production, distribution and service, and also consumption. Two domains are being employed in the food supply chain considering food safety and quality. The First one is being laws and regulations which use necessary standards which are checked and inspected by state government agencies. The another one depend on alternative standards that are governed by international associations and market laws (Bendekovic et al., 2015).

**Effects of pandemic on the availability of workers :** Restricted movement of people due to following Covid-19 measure will ripple through food systems. Farmers across globe ramping

up for harvesting season require huge chunk of people in their fields to harvest crops. But following Covid-19 safety measures during pandemic has derail some of those efforts. shortage of labour due to COVID-19 surge has caused extreme disruptions in various sectors which include production of livestock, harvesting, crop processing, planting and horticulture which are more or less labour intensive (Stephens et al., 2020). However, shortage interms of farmworkers was a major challenge well before the outbreak of COVID-19 too (Richards and Rickard, 2020). Infact the blow to world food production is not clear, and is dependent on how far the pandemic counter measures last. Extreme shortage in the food items have occurred . A big concern that is shared by all food ventures is maintaining the health of its workers and the provision of enough employees due to those who are not willing to work either because of their sickness or the fear of coronavirus. It is very much necessary to safeguard and keep up the health of employees working in the food supply chain in the course of crisis (FAO and WHO, 2020).

### **Effects of Covid-19 on apple growers**

Though some amount of work can be continued easily with meagre interruption. Work requires machines had already resulted in lessened social and physical contact and fall with in Centre for Disease Control and Prevention advisories for spread of coronavirus. But more widely accepted crops face a large number of obstacles. These foods such ad fruits, generally require more labour. One example can be cited from apple orchards, which need huge chunks of people to prune and plant trees. Pruning helps to carve out diseased and unwanted branches and gives more space to sunlight. But ample number of apple growers dependent on seasonal labour's from outside. Without an ample number of labour's, growers may have to leave branches unpruned and trees unplanted. Growers also need large number of people to pluck and distribute apples. Meanwhile, due to the reduction in the number of employees and working people, as a result of physical and social distance to be maintained. These circumstances slowed down the timely delivery of agricultural inputs and food items, and resulted in the creation of problems in providing uninterrupted food supply to outlets and market destinations (ILO, 2020). As all processes and different phases in a chain of food supply are very much integrated to each other, a little glitch or delay can result in a large effect which may result in a huge loss in the processing and output (FAO, 2020k)

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