



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

*Jody L. Hayes
Chief Executive Officer*

*Patrice M. Dietrich
Assistant Executive Officer*

*Raul Mendez
Assistant Executive Officer*

Press Release

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Contact: Amy Collier Carroll
carrolla@stancounty.com
209-652-1177

County Pushes Thousands of Face Coverings to Ag & Other Sectors

The Stanislaus County Agricultural Commissioner's office has worked closely with partners in the ag industry since May to distribute over 230,000 face coverings to farm workers and those in the essential food and agriculture industry in our county.

Since N95 masks are required for anyone working closely with pesticides, and personal protective equipment has been difficult to obtain during the COVID-19 pandemic, Milton O'Haire, Stanislaus County's Agricultural Commissioner made a request to the State Department of Pesticide Regulation and the California Department of Food and Agriculture for a distribution of masks, specifically requesting N95 masks. These masks offer a higher level of protection against airborne particles. Based on the potential of respirating chemicals, these are reserved for agricultural workers who apply pesticides.

Roughly 337,000 face coverings have been received by the county since that request. These shipments have included 100,800 N95 masks and 237,000 cloth and disposable masks. Working closely with the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau, County Office of Emergency Services, Ag Safe and county staff, deliveries to ag workers began on May 20. Since then, over 230,000 face coverings and nearly 25,000 N95 masks have been delivered to growers, dairy workers, migrant farm workers, food processors, pesticide companies and others keeping our food production operations going strong in our region. Farm workers have received over 50,000 masks.

The Stanislaus County Public Health Division has also distributed over 26,000 cloth face coverings throughout the county to nonprofit organizations, church groups, health care centers, community partners, parent resource centers and school districts. Public Health mask and face covering distribution is critical to the health services effort to fight the spread of illness. Along with the face coverings, public health includes COVID-19

fliers and testing information cards, printed in English and Spanish. Several community partners have been vital to this distribution.

If members of the agricultural community need face coverings or N95 masks they should call the Ag Commissioners office at (209) 525-4732. General questions related to public health and Covid-19 can be directed to the 211 Call Center or (209)558-7535.

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