Coronavirus – questions and answers

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The occurrence of the coronavirus (Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2) continues to create significant uncertainty. We are currently receiving a high number of enquiries. Therefore, we would like to provide answers to the following, most frequent questions concerning agriculture, livestock husbandry, food and nutrition.

We have also provided links to more detailed information. In addition, you will find a list of key contacts for issues relating to the coronavirus. The FAQs are also available in Turkish and Polish.

AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK HUSBANDRY

In the following, you will find FAQs on the coronavirus that relate to agriculture and livestock husbandry.

According to the Federal Government, what is the status of the agricultural sector in the coronavirus crisis?
In its meeting on 23 March 2020, the Federal Cabinet recognised the agri-food industry, including the fisheries sector, as an infrastructure of systemic importance. Enterprises that perform activities connected with the production, processing or distribution of food are thus part of the “critical infrastructure”.
**What does “critical infrastructure” mean?**

The term “critical infrastructure” designates organisations and institutions of major importance for the national community. This means that if the operation of these institutions was interrupted or impaired, this would lead to long-lasting supply shortages or severe disturbances of public security or would entail other dramatic consequences. Enterprises that are part of a critical infrastructure are therefore considered to be systemically important.

Within the scope of their COVID-19 crisis management, many of Germany’s federal states have decided that employees of enterprises classified as part of certain critical infrastructures are eligible for emergency childcare.

The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and its colleagues in charge of emergency food preparedness in the federal states have developed a guideline designed to serve as a non-binding manual for defining the term of “critical infrastructure in the food sector” (available for download here). The federal states have been encouraged to make this non-binding recommendation available to the Länder authorities that are responsible for issuing orders and taking measures under the Protection against Infection Act (IfSG).

The list contained in the guideline is only intended to serve as an example. The fact that one specific type of enterprise is not included in the list therefore does not mean that an enterprise of the given type cannot be part of a critical infrastructure.

For example, the critical infrastructure in the food sector includes:

→ food retailers
→ chemists’ shops
→ weekly markets and agricultural direct marketers
→ pick-up and delivery services in the food sector
→ food-producing enterprises
→ agricultural holdings, including specialised crop operations, livestock farms, hatcheries, animal-breeding enterprises

**Why are farmers eligible for support?**

Farmers produce our food: what they do not sow or plant today cannot be harvested tomorrow. This is why the agricultural sector is systemically important, just like the food industry. We therefore need to ensure that agricultural holdings have enough liquidity at their disposal, that supply chains are maintained and sufficient labour is available.

**What impact does COVID-19 have on our agricultural sector?**

The actual degree to which the agricultural sector is affected is currently in flux, just like the overall situation. Should COVID-19 spread further, our farmers may face detrimental economic consequences: for instance, if, due to a shortage of workers, sowing, planting or harvesting activities can only be carried out partly or cannot be carried out at all. Logistical problems such as delays in cross-border goods transport or shortage of personnel in transport companies may also lead to economic losses if products cannot be delivered to the supermarkets and consequently go bad.

**I am a farmer and have fallen ill myself. Where can I get support?**

If you fall ill as a farm owner, you can contact the Social Insurance Fund for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG). The SVLFG can provide you with a farm assistant or cover the costs for a farm assistant whom you have organised by yourself. Whether this is actually possible depends on the individual case and is subject to coordination with the local authorities.
For more information, please visit the SVLFG website: https://www.svlfg.de/

I am an employer in the agricultural production, processing or logistics sector. What possibilities do I have to introduce more flexible working hours for my staff?
Working time regulations have been made more flexible. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has issued an ordinance which, on a temporary basis, allows for working times to be extended to 12 hours a day and rest periods to be reduced to nine hours.

At the same time, the compensatory scheme for work on Sundays has been relaxed. The compensatory day of rest for employees who have to work on a Sunday must be granted within a period of eight weeks.

I am a farmer and have leased land. Due to the crisis, I am unable to pay my lease. How am I protected against termination of the lease?
Lease contracts of farmers who experience difficulties in paying their leases due to the coronavirus crisis may not be terminated unilaterally until 30 June 2020.

What measures for seasonal workers apply from 16 June 2020?
As soon as the entry restrictions imposed on 25 March 2020 have been lifted, seasonal workers may come to Germany again, either by land or by plane. Those arriving from third countries are allowed to enter in accordance with the applicable entry regulations.

The revised draft paper, which will apply from 16 June 2020, takes account of the current COVID-19 situation. It also takes into consideration the occupational health and safety regulations that have been adopted in the meantime.

The draft paper is available for download here.

Will I have to report my demand for labour after 15 June 2020?
No. Upon expiry of 15 June 2020, full freedom of movement will be restored for all business sectors in Germany, which includes workers in the agricultural industry. It will no longer be necessary to file a report with the German Farmers' Association. The regulations also permit seasonal workers to enter Germany by land or air.

What general requirements must be complied with in terms of occupational safety and health protection?
Any protective rights granted under the labour legislation in force, as well as hygiene and social distancing rules applicable to domestic workers, also apply to seasonal workers. Employers are obliged to comply with all occupational safety rules and labour laws that are applicable in Germany. The competent occupational safety authorities and customs authorities will control these working conditions.

What special occupational and hygiene regulations will be applicable to agricultural holdings from 16 June 2020?
Employers in the agricultural sector will be required to ensure that health protection is guaranteed in holdings and accommodation. This protection must be in accordance with the occupational health and safety rules specified by the Social Insurance Fund for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG) (confer SARS-CoV-2 occupational safety standard available under www.svlfg.de).

The principle of “living together – working together” applies. Employers must ensure that employees have as little contact with each other as possible and that the necessary distances can be kept. Dividing workers into fixed teams right from the start helps minimise the risk of spreading. Furthermore, safety distances of at least 1.5 m should be maintained as far as possible in all work-related contact. These distances must, in any case, be kept between the different teams on site.
What needs to be done if several groups share the same kitchens and bathrooms?
If some areas of the accommodation are shared by several teams, e.g. sanitary rooms or kitchens, organisational measures must be taken to ensure that the individual groups of workers do not come into contact with each other.

What documentation requirements do employers have?
In case of infection, all work-related contacts must be traceable. Holdings are required to take precautions to this effect. In particular, holdings are required to record workers’ address data and return or onward journeys as well as team composition and accommodation occupancy. The data must be destroyed four weeks after the seasonal worker’s departure.

What needs to be done if a harvest worker has become infected?
If one worker falls ill, the whole team must be isolated immediately. Sick workers must be accommodated separately from the other workers. The illness must be reported to the local health authority, with the employer providing the relevant information.

Who controls compliance with the occupational health and safety requirements?
The competent local authorities (e.g. health authorities, occupational health and safety authorities) are responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance with the specified regulations.
My holding is dependent on seasonal workers. What about short-term employment (70-day regulation)?

The so-called 70-day regulation has been temporarily extended until 31 October 2020. This allows seasonal workers who are already in Germany to work here longer without having to pay social security contributions. They are now permitted to carry out short-term activities for up to five months or 115 days per calendar year respectively. The criterion of professional activity, however, remains applicable to seasonal workers in the agricultural sector. According to this criterion, the given activity may not be carried out on a professional basis if monthly earnings exceed 450 euro. This also holds true for the prolongation of the regulation. If this threshold is exceeded, workers are subject to social insurance contributions.

For short-term employments, employers and seasonal workers are not required to pay contributions to unemployment insurance, health insurance, long-term care insurance or pension insurance. Seasonal workers employed on a short-term basis are insured under the statutory occupational accident insurance, with the insurance contributions being paid by the employer alone.

I am looking for seasonal workers. Where can I find relevant information and help?

With the support of the Federal Agriculture Ministry, the Association of the European National MR-Federations has launched a digital platform for staff placement during the coronavirus crisis. It enables farmers and job-seekers to establish contact free of charge and without unnecessary bureaucracy.

https://www.daslandhilft.de/

Further placement platforms include, for instance:

→ The German Farmers’ Association (DBV) and the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations in the Agricultural and Forestry Sectors (GLFA) now offer their placement service, which used to be subject to fees, free of charge: https://www.saisonarbeit-in-deutschland.de/

→ The “AgroBrain” career portal establishes contact between farmers and harvest workers from other sectors: https://erntenforfuture.de/

→ The “Erntehelfer-gesucht” platform (“Harvest workers wanted”): https://erntehelfer-gesucht.de/

→ The “Erntehilfe” (“harvesting support”) project was founded by the INFINITY Mannheim e.V. student initiative: https://www.erntehilfe.org/

Similar examples can be found elsewhere, with more of them expected to follow soon.

Of course, you can also access the Job Board provided by the Federal Employment Agency.

I am an employer and would like to lend staff to another business for the duration of the coronavirus crisis. Under what conditions am I allowed to do so?

During the coronavirus crisis, supplying temporary workers is possible without permission. This means that staff may work for different businesses. The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) has published further information on this topic.

What aid is there for farmers?

Loans are available from the Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank (central refinancing institution for agriculture and the food industry).

Who is eligible to apply for this aid?

Farmers, horticultural enterprises and vintners may, as of now, apply for loans from the Landwirtschaftliche Rentenbank in order to secure liquidity for their undertakings. “Undertakings in difficulty” in accordance with EU law are not eligible for support. The loans have terms of 4, 6 or 10 years, each with a one-year grace period. The programme will run until 30 June 2021.
Where can I file the application?
Please contact your local bank directly.

Further information:
https://www.rentenbank.de/foerderangebote/landwirtschaft/liquiditaetssicherung/

Service number for credit enquiries: 069/2107-700

What kind of support are fisheries and aquaculture farms eligible for?
The amendment to the Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) adopted in April provides for flexible aid for fisheries and aquaculture farms.

Thus, support is now available for temporary cessation of activities in the case of inland fishing as well. Sea fishing undertakings that have to temporarily decommission their fishing vessels may also be eligible for interim allowances for this. Furthermore, the regulation allows for funding of aquaculture farms under the EMFF.

Details on the specific funding measures and guidelines for inland fishing and aquaculture farms can be obtained from the competent Länder.

Are there any shortages of animal feed?
There are currently no shortages of animal feed, either for our livestock or for our pets. Purchases of primary products are being carried out as usual and the warehouses continue to be well-stocked according to the industry.

Sometimes, there may be delays in delivery to the markets due to logistical bottlenecks (resulting from staff shortages in transport companies). Commercial operators are already taking these longer delivery times into account.

Are there any bottlenecks regarding the supply of veterinary drugs in Germany?
There are currently no signs of existing bottlenecks regarding the supply of veterinary drugs in Germany. The competent authority, the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety, carefully monitors the availability of veterinary drugs and possible bottlenecks in the supply of these drugs.

Can pets contract the coronavirus from infected people?
As coronavirus infections are frequent among the human population, it is possible that susceptible pets may also become infected through close contact with infected people. In healthy cats and ferrets, such infections may be asymptomatic or only connected with minor symptoms.

However, a possible infection of pets does not automatically mean that the virus can multiply in the animals. Neither does it mean that the pets subsequently excrete the virus (e.g. through nasal secretion, phlegm when coughing or faeces). People infected with the coronavirus, especially those who are symptomatic, can excrete large quantities of the virus through their noses and mouths (droplet infection). It can be assumed that their environment is contaminated with the virus accordingly, even if they comply with basic rules of hygiene (such as sneezing and coughing into the crook of their arm, washing their hands, cleaning surfaces). Infected people should therefore pay particular attention to thorough hygiene, especially when being in contact with their pets. Where possible, they should avoid close contact and they should not cough or sneeze at their pets or let them lick their faces.
The Friedrich Loeffler Institute regularly publishes updated information on the role of domestic animals and livestock in connection with SARS-CoV-2:
https://www.fli.de/de/aktuelles/tierseuchengeschehen/coronavirus/

How high is the risk of pets being infected with the coronavirus?
Certain animals are susceptible to the pathogenic agent of the coronavirus. These include cats and ferrets. According to the latest scientific findings, dogs are less susceptible.

Several countries have reported isolated cases of domestic cats that tested positive and came from households affected by the coronavirus. There have also been case reports concerning tigers and lions from a zoo in the USA. A total of 15 infections in kept animals, i.e. domestic or zoo animals, have been reported worldwide. However, there is currently no evidence for pet-to-human transmission of the coronavirus.

Do pets need to be tested for the coronavirus?
As a general rule, animals should not be tested for SARS-CoV-2 without a specific reason. Pet owners are not obliged to have their pets tested. A test may only be advisable under certain circumstances, for example if a cat that lives in a household with reported cases of coronavirus infections shows relevant clinical symptoms. Should such a test be positive, reporting the case will be mandatory in the future.

Who is required to report the infected pet and when does the reporting requirement take effect?
Reporting will be mandatory for: directors of veterinary investigation centres, heads of veterinary services and other public or private testing agencies as well as veterinarians who detect a reportable disease.

The Bundesrat will be voting on the reporting requirement on 3 July. If the Bundesrat agrees to the requirement, the respective ordinance will soon be able to enter into force.

What happens to my pet if it has contracted the coronavirus?
You should directly consult your veterinarian or your local veterinary authority or public health authority. As a general rule, close contact with the affected animal should be avoided and the animal should be isolated for a minimum of 14 days.

Besides, general hygiene measures apply, such as washing your hands before and after each contact with the pet, not sharing food and avoiding extensive contact such as your pet sleeping in your bed.

What are the reasons for the proposed introduction of a reporting requirement?
By introducing a reporting requirement, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture would like to gain more clarity on the occurrence and spreading of coronavirus infections in pet animals. This will help us detect risks for animal and human health at an early stage in the future and adopt appropriate control measures.

Moreover, this will allow us to inform the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the EU Commission about confirmed cases of coronavirus infections in Germany. The reporting requirement is also of major international importance as it will enable scientists and researchers to collect further findings on infection, transmission, occurrence and spreading of the virus.

What does the reporting requirement mean for livestock farmers?
So far, there has not been any evidence suggesting that pigs, chickens or other livestock commonly kept in Germany can be infected with SARS-CoV-2. For this reason, testing slaughter animals for SARS-CoV-2 is not meaningful at present. The Friedrich Loeffler Institute has launched studies on the susceptibility of
animals to SARS-CoV-2 infection. The studies are aimed at assessing possible hazards for humans and animals and at testing whether animals can become virus reservoirs. Initial findings have shown that neither pigs nor chickens contract SARS-CoV-2.

NUTRITION AND FOOD

In the following, you will find FAQs on the coronavirus that relate to nutrition and food.

Can I contract the coronavirus by consuming food and products from the supermarket?
To date, there is no known proven case of people contracting the coronavirus by consuming contaminated foods.

Can I contract the coronavirus by consuming foods originating from abroad?
Here, too, there is not a single known case to date. Overall, it is unlikely that the coronavirus can be transmitted by goods from abroad.

Even so, should I take any particular precautions when handling food?
According to the assessment of the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, a transmission of the virus via contaminated or imported foods is unlikely. It is nevertheless important to comply with the general rules of hygiene. In concrete terms, this means: wash your hands thoroughly and regularly, do not touch your face with your hands and rinse foods thoroughly prior to preparation. One thing is certain: the viruses are heat-sensitive. The risk, which is already very low, can therefore be further reduced by heating foodstuffs.

For more information, please visit the links below:

→ The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment has compiled the most important questions and answers relating to this topic:
  www.bfr.bund.de/de/kann_das_neuartige_coronavirus_ueber_lebensmittel_und_spielzeug_uebertragen_werden_-244062.html

→ Technical article by scientists of Greifswald and Bochum Universities: https://www.uni-greifswald.de/universitaet/information/aktuelles/detail/n/wie-lang-coronaviren-auf-flaechen-ueberleben-und-wie-man-sie-inaktiviert-60251/

What do I need to consider when dining out?
If you dine out, you should bear a few things in mind. Coronaviruses can migrate into items by direct coughing or sneezing and be transmitted from there. In canteens, this primarily concerns trays and cutlery boxes. It is therefore imperative that cutlery should be handed to guests - for example when paying. Cashless payment is also advised in the interest of hygiene.

Beyond this, it is important that individual diners keep at a sufficient distance from each other in canteens and that queues are avoided. This means that measures to control and restrict access must be in place. And last but not least, spices, sugar casters, tables, chairs and door handles must be disinfected or replaced more frequently. The hygiene plan according to the Protection against Infection Act for the restaurant and catering sector needs to be reviewed on a regular basis. Hygiene training for company staff should be repeated at regular intervals.

When using delivery services, care should be taken to ensure that customers and suppliers do not come into contact with each other. You should order food by phone or online and also pay online. The delivery can then be left on your doorstep.
Particular attention should be paid to bakery shops and self-service automatic bakery machines, as flaps, tongs and other objects in the bakery shops are touched by customers who subsequently bag their pastries by hand and, in doing so, may transport viruses.

**Are our foods safe despite the spread of the coronavirus?**
Our foods are still safe to consume. Companies are still required to place only safe foods on the market. Existing quality requirements for official food controls will also remain in place.

**Are there any bottlenecks in food supplies?**
We have not seen any bottlenecks in the procurement of goods. According to the industry, warehouses are well-stocked. Along with affording effective protection against infections, ensuring the population’s supply of food takes top priority.

At the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, a number of factors, for example border controls, led to delays in the intra-Community movement of goods, thus causing some bottlenecks in the delivery of food to the markets.

The empty shelves in supermarkets and food shops unsettled consumers. The retail food trade and the food industry worked at full stretch to refill the shelves as quickly as possible. Supermarkets were well-stocked again shortly afterwards and have remained so ever since.

**Coronavirus crisis: Would Germany be able to provide for itself?**
Germany has a high degree of self-sufficiency as far as many staple foods are concerned. It accounts for over 100 percent of its demand in the case of wheat, potatoes, meat and dairy products, for instance. This means that more potatoes or meat are produced nationwide than are purchased, eaten or processed in Germany.

**When would the Federal Government intervene in order to ensure food supplies?**
This would only happen in the event of a supply crisis within the meaning of the relevant Act (the Act governing the security of food supplies and emergency food supplies, ESVG in short). However, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture does not currently expect the coronavirus situation to result in such a supply crisis. Food supplies for the population are secure at present.

According to the ESVG, one can only speak of a supply crisis if the capacity to meet the demand for essential foodstuffs in large parts of Germany is seriously at risk and if, without market intervention by the Federal Government, this risk cannot be avoided in time or can only be avoided by disproportionate means.

For more information, please visit the links below:

→ [https://ernaehrungsvorsorge.de/staatliche-vorsorge/haeufig-gestellte-fragen-faq](https://ernaehrungsvorsorge.de/staatliche-vorsorge/haeufig-gestellte-fragen-faq)
→ Ernährungsvorsorge - Maßnahmen zur Überbrückung von Versorgungsengpässen
→ Online-Vorratskalkulator - berechnen Sie Ihren persönlichen Vorrat für bis zu 28 Tage

**Has the spread of the coronavirus caused a rise in food prices?**
Food prices were 4.8 percent higher in April 2020 than they were in April 2019. Just like in the previous months, this was mainly due to price increases for products such as vegetables, fruit, fresh sausage and meat. However, prices for pigmeat and meat products had already risen before the coronavirus crisis began.
The price increase for some fruit and vegetables is due in part to the fact that consumer demand has grown and deliveries from important supplier countries such as Spain or Italy have become more difficult.

The price increase for major dairy products results from the fact that demand for these products, and particularly for long-life dairy products, has risen during the coronavirus crisis.

**What do mothers have to bear in mind when breastfeeding?**

Breastfeeding is still recommended. The National Breastfeeding Committee states in an opinion: so far, no COVID-19 pathogens have been detected in the breast milk of infected women, although the studies are still based on a very small number of cases. Therefore there is currently no scientific evidence suggesting that COVID-19 can be transmitted via breast milk. The main risk factor for a transmission via breastfeeding is close contact with the skin. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the risks, which means that breastfeeding is recommended subject to compliance with the required hygiene measures. Infected mothers or suspected cases should, during breastfeeding, prevent the virus from being transmitted via droplet infection by carrying out hygiene measures such as thorough hand washing before and after contact with the child and by wearing a face mask.

For more information, please visit the links below:

→ The entire opinion of the National Breastfeeding Committee is available under: [https://www.mri.bund.de/de/themen/nationale-stillkommission/stellungnahmen/](https://www.mri.bund.de/de/themen/nationale-stillkommission/stellungnahmen/)


**Can I protect myself from infection by taking food supplements?**

Offers of food supplements that specifically refer to the coronavirus in their advertising are inadmissible. The general rule applying to food supplements and any other foods is: health-promoting effects may only be attributed to them if these claims have been approved by the European Commission after scientific assessment conducted by the European Food Safety Authority yielded positive results.

Nevertheless, various Internet platforms offer “Corona food supplements”. The Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety (BVL) will now contact the operators of the platforms and ask them to pay greater attention to these offers and to no longer offer such products for sale.

Please see the website of the Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety for further information on this issue.

**FOOD INDUSTRY**

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The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture and its colleagues in charge of emergency food preparedness in the federal states have developed a guideline designed to serve as a non-binding manual for defining the term of "critical infrastructure in the food sector" (available for download here). The federal states have been encouraged to make this non-binding recommendation available to the Länder authorities that are responsible for issuing orders and taking measures under the Protection against Infection Act (IfSG).

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For example, the critical infrastructure in the food sector includes:

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→ weekly markets and agricultural direct marketers
→ pick-up and delivery services in the food sector
→ food-producing enterprises
→ agricultural holdings, including specialised crop operations
→ livestock farms, hatcheries, animal-breeding enterprises

What impact has COVID-19 had on our food industry?
At the moment, our food industry, the specialised food trade and our food retailers are busy satisfying private households’ sharply increased demand for long-life foods, in particular. Enterprises are suffering from labour shortages. The situation is being aggravated by the fact that, in this sector, home working is only possible to a very limited degree. In order to be able nevertheless to adequately meet the increased demands placed on our retail food trade, other enterprises are in many places supporting discount grocery chains and supermarkets. For example, catering businesses, which are less busy at present, are supplying staff to grocery stores to assist them in stocking their shelves.

Are there any logistical problems?
It is evident that products that cannot be delivered will be missing from the supermarket shelves. The aim is therefore at all costs to prevent logistical failures in enterprises that are of systemic importance to our food supply. Together with the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure, we have found viable solutions for ensuring the supply of goods. For instance, we have increased the flexibility of driving and rest periods in the movement of goods and in freight transport. Furthermore, controls of the ban on lorries driving on Sundays and public holidays have been suspended.
What does the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture do to support our food industry?
The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture is constantly liaising with all market participants, e.g. to
discuss issues raised by the food retail sector and the food industry.

EMPLOYEES AND JOB-SEEKERS

In the following, you will find FAQs on the coronavirus with regard to employees and people seeking
employment.

I would like to work in the agricultural sector. Where can I find relevant information and help?
With the support of the Federal Agriculture Ministry, the Association of the European National MR-
Federations has launched a digital platform for staff placement during the coronavirus crisis. It enables
farmers and job-seekers to establish contact free of charge and without unnecessary bureaucracy.
https://www.daslandhilft.de/

Further placement platforms include, for instance:
   → The German Farmers’ Association (DBV) and the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations
       in the Agricultural and Forestry Sectors (GLFA) now offer their placement service, which used to be
       subject to fees, free of charge: https://www.saisonarbeit-in-deutschland.de/
   → The “AgroBrain” career portal establishes contact between farmers and harvest workers from other
       sectors: https://erntenforfuture.de/
   → The “Erntehelfer-gesucht” platform (“Harvest workers wanted”): https://erntehelfer-gesucht.de/
   → The “Erntehilfe” (“harvesting support”) project was founded by the INFINITY Mannheim e.V. student
       initiative: https://www.erntehilfe.org/

Similar examples can be found elsewhere, with more of them expected to follow soon.

Of course, you can also access the Job Board provided by the Federal Employment Agency.

I am a seasonal worker and would like to work for longer than the 70 days permitted so far. What are the
applicable regulations?
Until 31 October 2020, seasonal workers may take up short-term employment that is exempt from social
security contributions for up to 115 days per calendar year. Previously, this was possible for up to 70 days.
This allows seasonal workers who are already in Germany to work here longer without having to pay
social security contributions. Farms will thus have help with their harvesting and sowing activities. The
criterion of professional activity, however, remains applicable to seasonal workers in the agricultural
sector.

I am an employee and am currently working short-time. I would be willing to work as a seasonal worker in
the agricultural sector. What would that mean for my short-time working allowance?
Our farming community needs helping hands. In order to create incentives for temporary work in the
agricultural sector, a secondary income from agriculture will, for the duration of the coronavirus crisis,
not be credited against the short-time working allowance up to the amount of the previous wage.

If you have any questions concerning the detailed calculation, please contact the Federal Employment
Agency.
Coronavirus crisis: I used to be a farmer, am now in early retirement and would like to resume work on a temporary basis. What is the situation regarding my limit for supplementary earnings?
The limit for supplementary earnings for former farmers under the early retirement scheme has been entirely suspended for the duration of 2020.

At the same time, for people receiving early retirement benefits, the limit for supplementary earnings under the statutory pension fund will be significantly raised for the duration of 2020. This means that additional earnings up to an annual amount of 44,590 euro will not be credited against the retirement pension.

Will the limit for supplementary earnings also be raised to the amount of the previous net income for unemployed people?
No, for people receiving unemployment benefits, there is currently no arrangement comparable to the short-time working allowance. Unemployed people may take up work directly in an agricultural holding.

Will there be any changes for students and pupils with regard to the coronavirus crisis / temporary work in enterprises?
Young people are very welcome to assist in enterprises that currently have an increased need of labour, e.g. in the agricultural sector. To this effect, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has adapted the regulations under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BAföG). BAföG grant holders who engage in pandemic control and thereby gain a relatively high income within a short period of time should not face any disadvantages.

Detailed information is available on the website of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research: https://www.bafög.de/keine-nachteile-beim-bafög-wegen-corona-756.php

FURTHER INFORMATION

In the following, you will find FAQs on the coronavirus in respect of further contacts and hotlines.

Do you have further questions concerning the coronavirus crisis?
Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We have launched a hotline to answer all the questions stakeholders from the agri-food sector and consumers might have with regard to the coronavirus pandemic.

Further information:

Key contacts for enquiries regarding the coronavirus
→ Federal Ministry of Health (BMG) https://www.bundesgesundheitsministerium.de/coronavirus.html
→ Robert Koch Institute https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/nCoV.html