EXAMPLES OF RATIONALES SUBMITTED TO STATE OF VERMONT

TO CONTINUE TO OPERATE A GREENHOUSE, NURSERY AND FLORICULTURE BUSINESS

Compiled 3/28/20

“We understand the food producing portion of our farm can continue without special requests. We are requesting permission to continue our ornamental and vegetable starts/bedding plants business as we will have a website, on the Shopify platform, where all sales transactions will be on-line and purchases will be picked up the next day, "curb-side", to ensure there will be absolutely no person to person contact. Pick-up schedules will be daily for limited hours with the requirement that customers wait in their car until no one else is picking up their purchases and request that they touch only their purchases. Customers will not be allowed to enter the greenhouses or to interact person to person with staff or farm owners. Please let us know when we may hear an answer to this request, as maintaining the plants is costly with staff and heating costs as well as supplies continuing to be procured. Thank you in advance of a reply.”

“It is unclear whether our on-farm seedling sales (5 weekends in May, early June) are as essential as the crops we grow for food. Selling plants to growers and home gardeners for their own food production is critical during the COVID 19 pandemic. It is the essence of local and diversified food security. Our farm has been a pioneer in food safety, and we have had a written food safety plan in place for years. We follow all FSMA rules, and additionally are CAPS Plus certified, a food safety program administered by the VT Agency of Agriculture. As for additional COVID 19 protocols, we take this very seriously and strategize daily how best to move forward. Some current practices include: separating employees to individual tasks with distances much greater than 6 feet, reaffirming the 6' or more rule and frequent thorough hand washing, limiting people entering the farm (deliveries and employees only). We stagger the days of part time employees so there is very little overlap. Looking ahead to our weekend plant sales in May and early June, we have numerous ideas to best protect customers and employees alike. Possibilities are: designated hours for at-risk shoppers, spreading out plant display tables both inside and outside to keep shoppers separated, limiting the number of shoppers at a time, different check out layout and procedures, hand sanitizers in various locations, signage stating our COVID 19 protocols, and setting up our website for online ordering with curbside pickup. As we get closer to May, our current plans will be available on our website, newsletter and Facebook page. Thank you for your consideration with this issue.”

“During this time of year, we are working on both the plants that will be producing vegetables to sell from our farm stand and wholesale markets, and also seedlings for our annual plant sale that will start at the end of May. These plants are sold to customers that want to grow their own back yard gardens for food. We are also selling spring vegetables like asparagus, spinach, and lasts seasons root vegetables during this plant sale in May. We already have a plan in writing, of how we will be conducting this sale. If customers are not able to browse for plants and vegetables during this time, we will be able to take orders on line, pack up their box, and they can drive up (curb side) and we will load into their vehicle with no contact. As the owner, I plan to be the primary person packing and loading into vehicles. Employees will only be helping by restocking from the greenhouse to the farm stand and easily be more than 6 ft away at all times. Thank you for this consideration.”