



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

**Victoria Prentis MP**  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Minister for Farming, Fisheries and Food

Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577  
defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

29 March 2021

To the farmers and growers helping to feed the nation,

I am writing to all employers of seasonal agricultural workers to ask for your help in keeping the nation safe and restricting the spread of the COVID-19, by urgently registering to receive free kits to ensure regular testing for your permanent and seasonal employees.

The government is offering to supply free Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests to employers in order to identify people who may be carrying the infection without symptoms. The tests can be carried out at a designated workplace site, and for businesses of over 10 people, employers can dispense those tests for staff to take at home. If positive results come back, staff must take swift action to isolate and undertake a confirmatory Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test.

Regular testing protects businesses, helps keep workers safe, and is vital to Britain's continued recovery. I am proud that over 60,000 businesses have already registered, with more joining every day.

The government has also just announced bespoke provisions for testing seasonal agricultural workers when they arrive in the UK. Seasonal workers play a vital role across many of our farms, picking fruit and vegetables and contributing to the UK's fresh food supply. They are permitted to self-isolate on the farm while working in cohorts and maintaining social distancing. The bespoke testing regime requires an LFD test to be carried out on or before days 2, 5 and 8 after arrival. Employers of seasonal agricultural workers who register for workplace testing can access free tests to use in meeting the testing requirement. This is a fantastic opportunity for our growers, representing a saving to the sector of up to £10 million.

I urge you to work with us in protecting your workforce, your business and our nation's public health. **Employers must register for the programme by 12 April to receive a supply of free test kits until the end of June.**

Registering your interest is quick and easy, but must be done by 12 April – businesses applying after the deadline will not be eligible for free kits through this programme. Sign up at <https://www.gov.uk/get-workplace-coronavirus-tests>.

I am immensely grateful for the resilience our growers have shown throughout the last year, meeting the challenges of the pandemic. Now, as we look towards resuming a more normal way of life, we must stay vigilant and do what we can to ensure we continue to operate as safely as possible.

Yours sincerely,

*Victoria Prentis*

**VICTORIA PRENTIS MP**