



# NEWS RELEASE

Mary Brumage  
Marketing and Media Specialist  
(970) 522-3741 x1257  
maryb@nchd.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Northeast Colorado Health Department Reports on Cargill COVID-19 Response**

Sterling, Colo. – April 20, 2020: As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the national focus has turned to concern about the strength of the food supply chain. Having multiple critical businesses that are associated with food processing in our six county (Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma) health district, Northeast Colorado Health Department (NCHD) is continuing to work closely with each business to provide technical support and guidance to improve staff protection from infection so that they can safely remain open.

One such facility that is at the forefront of state and national attention is the Cargill meat processing facility located in Fort Morgan. After an invitation to tour the plant, Public Health Director, Trish McClain addressed in a report to the State Public Health Department, unprecedented processes and procedures that facility management have put in place to keep food product and employees safe.

“More than 2,000 people count on this plant for their paychecks, but no one disputes the fact that their lives are even more important,” expresses Director

McClain “I believe Cargill has made employee health a priority, and their practices are an example for other food industry companies to follow.”

The health department report identifies that Cargill is proactively applying Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance for employee face covering, added cleaning measures, personal protective equipment usage and social distancing practices. In many areas, they have gone beyond the general guidance and implemented innovative approaches to employee safety.

“We are making decisions guided by our values,” said Tyler Luft, general manager for Cargill’s Fort Morgan protein facility. “The team is working to keep employees safe, feed the nation and keep the agricultural economy moving.”

This sincerity extends to management’s transparency with NCHD on efforts to actively screen staff, their significant modifications to employee flow and production line conversion, as well as enforcement of isolation and quarantine directives by deactivating staff badges shows how proactive and how far-reaching their efforts are to protect staff.

Cases of COVID-19 have continued to increase in our six county health district, including Fort Morgan, emphasizing the need for social distancing and to stay home unless performing necessary activities. So far, NCHD in cooperation with Cargill has been notified of 23 positive results for employees, leading to 1 death. The company continues to enforce a mandatory 14-day quarantine for any team member who tests positive for COVID-19 as well as any employees who they have come into close contact with.

“Cargill continues to work in close partnership with the NCHD to ensure we are following the appropriate safety protocols.” said Luft. “We are part of this

community and want to work together to keep each other safe, people at work and the country fed.”

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