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Another Maine blueberry farm detects COVID-19 cases among newly arrived workers

by **Charles Eichacker**

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Four cases of COVID-19 have been detected among workers at a Wyman's blueberry location in Milbridge, according to the Maine CDC. It's the third outbreak at a blueberry facility over the past week, which growers have discovered through proactive testing of workers arriving from

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of-state, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 23.

Four cases of the disease have now been reported among workers at Wyman's of Maine in Milbridge, according to state health officials. The cases were detected as the company tested newly arrived workers as the blueberry harvest season picks up. The company had tested nearly 170 people, Nirav Shah, director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said Tuesday afternoon.



Moreover, additional cases of the coronavirus have been detected at two other businesses that

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There are now 10 confirmed cases of the virus among workers at Hancock Foods in the town of Hancock, up from eight last Thursday, according to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention. And there are nine confirmed cases at Merrill Blueberry Farms in Ellsworth, up from three late last week when the outbreak was first reported.

At Wyman's, President and CEO Tony Shuman said the company has worked with the Maine Mobile Health Program to comprehensively test workers as they arrive this year.

"The pre-emptive screening of these employees is working exactly as intended," he said. "As soon as these cases were identified, immediate action was taken to move and isolate the individuals, and anyone traveling with them, into pre-designated quarantine locations. While quarantined, they will be provided the personal and medical care they need, through our relationship with local public health officials, and they will still receive compensation."

He added, "We only have one month to bring in the fruit that we'll sell for the next 12 months, and our goal from the start has been to do so as safely and effectively as possible."

Nirav Shah, director of the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said that the harvest workers who test positive are now being offered housing at an unidentified location in Bangor where they can safely stay until they are recovered from the infection. That is meant to prevent the spread of the infection among other workers.

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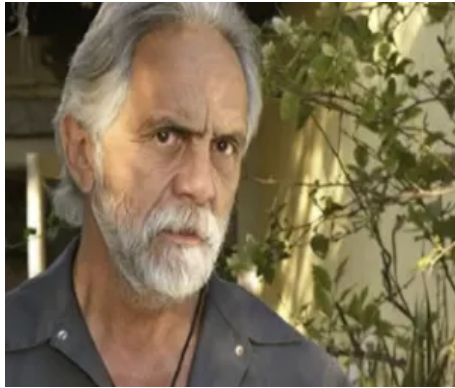
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BDN writer Bill Trotter contributed reporting.



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