



January 30, 2025

Dear Industry Partners and Stakeholders,

Effective Thursday, January 30, 2025, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture is implementing a mandatory treatment procedure for mushroom houses in New Garden Township and Kennett Township, Chester County due to the continued increase of Phorid Fly populations. Phorid Fly is a pest which feeds on fungi and plants and reproduces in the dark, humid environments of mushroom houses. This pest is a threat to the mushroom industry, as it destroys 10-40% of crops, contributing to increased crop losses and impacts to farm revenue. Additionally, Phorid Fly is a nuisance pest in residential homes, creating problems for local residents.

The Department, in partnership with industry, has been closely monitoring the rise in Phorid Fly populations and determined that this step is essential to safeguard our nation-leading mushroom industry. The mushroom industry in Chester County is a key part of Pennsylvania's agricultural legacy, and it is crucial that we protect it. While many mushroom growers are already following best management practices, this action from the Department ensures that all growers are held to the same standard, helping to collectively protect and preserve the industry in Chester County.

To assist in controlling Phorid Fly, the Department has implemented a quarantine order that will require mushroom farms in the areas and zones established in the order to perform a heat-treatment process called "steaming off" which raises the indoor temperature of the mushroom growing houses to a level sufficient to kill all flies and fly larvae. This is an established industry best management practice that has proven effective. The Plant Pest Act provides the Department authority to implement such an order and establish required treatment protocols to control, contain and limit the spread of pests and protect our agriculture industry.

Reducing and controlling the infestation of Phorid Fly in Chester County will require partnership. The Department remains in coordination with the American Mushroom Institute and local leaders to ensure that the community and industry concerns are addressed. The Department continues to work with our research partners at Penn State University to invest in developing new best management practices and safe pesticides to curb Phorid Fly, while protecting the integrity of the mushroom crop. Additionally, the Department has partnered with the Chester County Conservation District to make funding available to assist mushroom growers who must implement new practices or make upgrades as a result of this order.

Questions about the quarantine order and best management practices can be directed to the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry at 717-787-4843 or email at RA-AGPhorid@pa.gov. A list of frequently asked questions is also available on the Department's website.



Pennsylvania  
Department of Agriculture

We appreciate the mushroom industry and Chester County community's willingness to work proactively with the Department through this infestation to safeguard Pennsylvania's agriculture economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell C. Redding".

Russell C. Redding  
Secretary