



May 26, 2020

To: Distribution

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: AMVAC's Phases ~ COVID in Vernon ~ Air Travel ~ Hydroxychloroquine**

AMVAC's Phase 1, 2 and 3. While the onset of the pandemic and COVID restrictions was sudden, the easing of restrictions has been gradual, with many states within the U.S. implementing a phased approach toward reopening their businesses. After having responded quickly to the pandemic and implementing our own changes in the workplace, AMVAC is now faced with the prospect of planning the way by which we will be working on a more permanent basis. As of today, that new way is undefined. The definition will come from discussion with our departmental managers, consideration of site configurations, the profile of our workforce, and the recommendations of agencies and experts, to name but a few. You can be assured that your safety and health, as well as that of your families, will be the foundation of these considerations. Once again, we thank you for your continued dedication to the company as we work together to navigate this enterprise through these times.

Vernon, CA COVID Cases. As reported by many sources, including ABC News, multiple cases of coronavirus have been detected in several food processing facilities located in Vernon, California, which is a few miles from our facilities in Commerce. The Los Angeles Department of Public Health reported the highest level of infections – 153 cases out of 1,837 employees – at the Farmer John meatpacking plant, which is owned by Smithfield Foods and produces, among other things, Dodger Dogs. That plant appears in this photo from ABC News. Other Vernon facilities with outbreaks include Cal Farms Meat Company, F. Gavina & Sons, Inc. (coffee), Golden West Trading (various foods), Overhill Farms (frozen food), Rose & Shore (deli meat), Takaoyaka USA (tea and specialty foods) and Vie De France Yamazaki (bakery). According to the CDC, nearly 5,000 meat packing workers at 115 facilities in 19 states have tested positive for coronavirus. This trend has drawn the attention of public health officials beyond meat processors more broadly to include other food processing facilities.



Air Travel Safety Studies. As reported by the Wall Street Journal, with air travel having plummeted during the pandemic and would-be passengers still skittish about airborne safety and health, Boeing Co. and Airbus SE are commencing research to define the behavior of the coronavirus

inside their jetliners. These studies will include academics, engineers and medical experts and potentially new technologies, such as self-cleaning materials and touchless devices in lavatories. While much is known about ventilation and how some pathogens spread in flight, according to University of Washington microbiologist, John Scott Meschke, however, “There are a lot of unknowns right now” when it comes to coronavirus. On the more cautious side, Purdue University’s Qingyan Chen says that “Social distancing is impossible in an airplane.” As WSJ points out, there is no industry-wide set of practices among U.S. airlines for even the most fundamental considerations such as face coverings. We are encouraged to hear that Boeing and Airbus are working apace to help define how best to limit contagion on aircraft. Further, our prior recommendation against air travel (unless it is essential and has received approval of this group) remains unchanged until the major carriers adopt a uniform standard that ensure safety for our employees and for all passengers.

Hydroxychloroquine Update. Last week we reported that the compound hydroxychloroquine (which is used as an anti-malarial and for arthritis and lupus) had assumed center stage in the public forum as a potential therapeutic for coronavirus. This attention arose primarily from early, limited studies and the fact that President Trump, who has not tested positive for coronavirus, has been taking the drug for the past few weeks. We noted in our earlier report that multiple studies were underway to test the thesis that this drug has benefits and/or poses no harm to COVID patients. As reported by Medscape, the results of one such study have just been published. In the largest observational study of its kind involving about 100,000 people in 671 hospitals on six continents, investigators compared outcomes among 15,000 patients with COVID-19 who were treated with hydroxychloroquine alone, chloroquine alone or one of these drugs in combination with other compounds, on the one hand, and 80,000 patients in a control group. They concluded that those COVID patients treated with hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine, whether alone or in combination, showed higher rates of mortality, more frequent rates of ventricular arrhythmias and, essentially, no benefit from these compounds.

If you have any questions or comments on this advisory, please contact either kellyw@amvac.com or timd@amvac.com .