



Produce Safety Rule FAQs for Fruit and Vegetable Growers



This fact sheet provides fruit and vegetable growers with information about the Produce Safety Rule (PSR) and gives examples of what growers must do to be in compliance with the PSR. The PSR is very comprehensive and, while this fact sheet does not include the entire Rule, it provides a general overview of what is expected of farmers.

WHO HAS TO COMPLY WITH THE PRODUCE SAFETY RULE?

Farmers who grow, harvest, pack or hold produce that is usually consumed raw AND who sell more than \$25,000 in produce per year. FDA has created a list of commodities that are considered rarely consumed raw and are the only fruits and vegetables excluded from the PSR. There are also some exemptions depending on sales, markets and commercial processing. Visit www.fda.gov/FSMA for more information.

WHAT COMMODITIES ARE CONSIDERED RARELY CONSUMED RAW?

Asparagus; black beans, great Northern beans, kidney beans, and pinto beans; garden beets (roots and tops) and sugar beets; cashews; sour cherries; chickpeas; cocoa beans; coffee beans; collards; sweet corn; cranberries; dates; dill (seeds and weed); eggplants; figs; horseradish; hazelnuts; lentils; okra; peanuts; pecans; peppermint; potatoes; pumpkins; winter squash; sweet potatoes; and water chestnuts. Also excluded from the PSR are food grains including dent- or flint-corn, sorghum, oats, rice, rye wheat, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, and oilseeds.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

There are 6 standards under the Produce Safety Rule. Turn this document over to learn more about the standards. In addition to following the standards, someone from your farm must attend a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training. Information on those trainings can be found at: www.coproductsafety.org.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR THE PRODUCE SAFETY RULE?

Farmers can request an On-Farm Readiness Review which is a voluntary visit where farmers are able to ask questions about the Produce Safety Rule and have their food safety practices reviewed to determine if they are compliant with the Rule. This visit is non-regulatory and it is confidential.

WHO CAN YOU CONTACT?

Cristy Dice
Cristy.L.Dice@colostate.edu
970-491-2942

Martha Sullins
Martha.Sullins@colostate.edu
970-491-3330



WWW.COPRODUCE SAFETY.ORG

Worker Health and Hygiene

- Farmers need to train employees on health and hygiene practices including proper hand washing, appropriate restroom use and personal cleanliness.
- Employees also need to be trained on food safety practices that pertain to their specific roles at the farm.
- Employees need to be trained to identify and not harvest contaminated produce and to not use contaminated bins/crates/packaging.
- Employees need to be trained in a way that they understand either through appropriate media (written, videos, pictures) and/or in a language they can understand.
- **Fast Fact:** Hand sanitizer cannot be used in place of hand washing using soap and water.

Soil Amendments

- Only soil amendments that contain products of animal origin (manure, fish emulsion, poultry litter pellets, etc.) are covered under the PSR.
- Only soil amendments that come into contact with the harvestable part of the crop would need to comply with the soil amendment requirements.
- **Fast Fact:** Only soil amendments that contact the produce (which is the harvestable portion of the crop) are subject to the soil amendment requirements under the PSR. If you use soil amendments that do not contact the produce or are used at a time when produce is not present then you would not need to comply with this part of the PSR.

Domesticated and Wild Animals

- All areas used for growing fruits and vegetables should be monitored for wildlife and be assessed for contamination prior to harvest.
- Any contamination needs to be clearly identified and its presence communicated to employees so they can avoid it or manage it as required in the farm's procedures.
- **Fast Fact:** The PSR does not require fruit and vegetable growers to exclude wildlife from their fields; however, it requires them to monitor for the presence of wildlife and have a plan for managing any animal intrusions into growing areas.

Equipment, Tools and Buildings

- Any tools, equipment or buildings used for produce need to be maintained such that they do not become a source of contamination, and tools and equipment that contact fruits and vegetables need to be properly cleaned and sanitized during the season.
- Buildings need to be monitored and maintained so they do not become a harborage for pests. Farmers need to have pest management practices and monitoring in place.
- Any equipment such as pallets, forklifts, tractors and vehicles that may come into contact with produce needs to be used in a manner so that they do not become a source of contamination to produce or to any surfaces that produce may touch.
- **Fast Fact:** While the PSR does not prohibit growers from using materials that cannot be cleaned or sanitized (cloth, wood, burlap, etc.), it does require you to clean them as best you can and then store them so that they do not become contaminated. This could include cleaning as needed and then storing those materials in a dry location up off the ground that is free of pests or other contaminants.

Post Harvest Handling and Sanitation

- All packaging materials used for produce (boxes, bins, etc.) need to be stored in a manner where they cannot become contaminated by pests or other sources of contamination, ideally stored in a covered area up off the floor.
- Employees need to be trained not to harvest *dropped covered produce* which is defined as produce that drops to the ground prior to harvest.
- Sanitizing is important for keeping food contact surfaces, tools and equipment from becoming a source of contamination. Sanitizers should be used according to their label directions and monitored for effectiveness. Temperature, turbidity and pH may also need to be monitored during sanitizer use.
- **Fast Fact:** Pressure washing of tools and equipment with hot water is not considered a sanitizing step because there is not enough contact time with the hot water to kill pathogens.

Agricultural Water

- Subpart E Agricultural Water under the Produce Safety Rule is not being enforced by the Colorado Department of Agriculture at this time.
- Only water that touches the harvestable portion of the crop will need to be in compliance with the Produce Safety Rule.
- Farmers can begin testing their water now to understand the quality of water they are using.
- **Fast Fact:** The water standards would likely not apply to irrigation systems where the water is not intended to contact the produce such as furrow or drip irrigation.