



COLORADO
Department of Agriculture



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

On-Farm Readiness Review Overview for Produce Growers

The On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR) is a non-regulatory, confidential assessment of a farm's readiness for compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. It is an excellent opportunity for fruit and vegetable growers to determine how their on-farm practices align with the Produce Safety Rule. As a grower, it is a chance for you to have a one-on-one discussion and walk-through of your farm practices with a Produce Safety Rule expert. We will evaluate your pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest practices and assess what you are doing well and identify areas of improvement. The OFRR is meant to help you determine areas of risk that you can improve upon, therefore, it will be important for us to discuss what you are actually doing on the farm, not what you hope to do one day. One thing to keep in mind is that you will not need to give us a farm tour of your operation, we will walk around the farm and discuss your farm food safety practices and policies with you to help determine if those policies and practices are compliant with the Produce Safety Rule.

The OFRR review team will consist of a member of the Colorado Department of Agriculture and a member of Colorado State University Extension. On some occasions we may request that another team member from either of our organizations join us for the OFRR as a training opportunity (this could be one of the CDA GAP/GHP auditors, CSU Food Safety Fellows, CDA Inspectors, etc.). The OFRR is a great opportunity for everyone to learn about the intersection of on-farm practices with the Produce Safety Rule.

Preparing for the OFRR:

It is recommended that someone from your farm attend the Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training Course prior to the On-Farm Readiness Review. This will help you get the most out of the OFRR and will allow us to discuss your practices as they pertain to the Produce Safety Rule. We encourage you to think through your farm food safety practices and be prepared to ask any questions you may have about how your practices align with the Rule.

To help you prepare for the types of things we will be discussing, please find below areas we will observe and discuss, along with examples of the types of questions we may ask.

Worker Health and Hygiene – What policies do you have for health and hygiene? When do you train your employees? What type of training do you provide? Do you keep records of training employees? What are your visitor policies? Where are your restroom and handwashing facilities located? Who services your facilities and how often? Do you have a plan for potential human waste spills?

Biological Soil Amendments – Do you use soil amendments of animal origin or agricultural teas? Where do you store them? What are your handling processes? Where do you get your soil amendments, do you make them or buy them? When do you apply your soil amendments?

Wildlife and Domestic Animals – Do you use working animals? How do you determine if you have had animal incursion in your fields? What do you do if you find evidence of animal intrusion in the field? What is your worker training policy for handling potentially contaminated produce? How do you dispose of animal feces found in the field?

Pre and Post-Harvest Sanitation – Do you grow covered and non-covered produce? Do you do a pre-harvest inspection? Do you inspect your equipment/containers/vehicles prior to or during harvest? Do you sanitize your containers, tools and/or equipment? If so, do you keep records? What is your policy on dropped covered produce? How do you prevent contamination of harvested produce? How do you transport harvested produce? Do harvest crews and packing crews receive different training? What is your pest management plan? What is your trash and cull produce removal plan?

Agricultural Water – What is your water source for each phase of your operation (growing, harvest and post harvest)? Do you inspect your water systems and how often? Do you currently test your water? What do you test for? When do you apply water to your crops? Do you use ice or do you hydro-cool produce? Do you re-use or recirculate water? How do you assess water quality during harvest and post-harvest activities? Do you monitor temperature and/or pH of water used for harvest activities or post-harvest processing? What records do you keep related to water use?

Prior to our Visit:

To help us plan for a successful visit, we will be calling you to discuss a few details regarding your farm. In addition to some basic information, this is an opportunity for you to let us know of any special concerns or additional information we need to know prior to our arrival. These are a few examples of what we might discuss:

- Commodities you grow
- Number of acres you farm
- Number of years you have been in production at this location
- Activities occurring on-farm and when
- Your markets and/or processing outlets
- Business size category for your farm and whether you qualify for an exemption
- Any biosecurity requirements or a visitor policy for us to review prior to our visit
- Any animals that may be loose on the property
- Any other precautions for when we arrive at the farm
- Directions to get to the farm (if needed) or a location where we can meet you

Day of our Visit:

Once we arrive at the farm, we will determine the schedule for the walk-through based on what activities are occurring on your farm that day. We will take a few minutes to go over the plan for the day and review the OFRR Manual with you.

When the OFRR walk-through is complete, the team will gather to discuss their thoughts and observations. We will then meet with you to discuss your food safety practices, reviewing practices you are doing well and any areas of improvement.

You will receive an OFRR Manual that you can use to make notes in and reference after the visit. The OFRR review team is not there to conduct an audit or inspection and we will all walk around together to discuss your farm practices.

After our Visit:

After the OFRR we will discuss any resources you would like to have provided to you, based on what we observed during our visit and any further questions you may have. CSU will provide the majority of the technical support that you might request after the OFRR. There may also be an option to have someone come back to your farm after the OFRR to offer on-farm technical assistance.

If you have any questions before or after your On-Farm Readiness Review, please contact Cristy Dice, Produce Safety Rule Program Manager, at 303-869-9282 or cristy.dice@state.co.us.

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