The Produce Safety Rule

The Produce Safety Rule is the first-ever mandatory, federal standard for growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fresh produce for human consumption.

The produce safety rule does not require farms to have a written food safety plan, but it does require keeping and maintaining certain records related to specific activities mandated by the rule.

Not all produce is covered by the regulation; the general provisions subpart of the rule includes information about the produce covered and not covered, definitions, who is subject to the requirements, and information pertaining to exemptions.

Some key requirements of the rule include, but are not limited to:

- Personnel qualifications and training requirements for those who handle covered produce or food contact surfaces, supervisors, and training records.

The rule covers health and hygiene measures to prevent contamination from ill or injured workers, personal hygiene practices that must be followed, and requirements for visitors.

The agricultural water subpart includes general water quality requirements, and criteria for certain intended uses, water source and water distribution system inspection, testing frequency, sampling and analysis requirements, corrective actions including treatment of agricultural water, measures to take during harvest, packing, and holding activities, and recordkeeping requirements.

For more information, please follow us at extension.psu.edu/fsma.

This program was developed by Food Safety CTS, LLC, for the USDA Food Safety and Agricultural Sustainability Training program and Penn State Extension.

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The rule has standards oriented to biological soil amendments of animal origin and prohibitions for use of human waste. These standards include: acceptable treatment processes, microbial standards for the treatment processes, application requirements and harvest intervals, recordkeeping requirements, and storage and handling of soil amendments.

Domesticated and wild animal requirements are aimed at minimizing the risk of biological contamination with animal feces from domesticated or wild animals. Management of animal intrusion events is also covered by the rule.

Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding Activities include standards for handling harvested produce, exclusion of dropped produce for fresh market, food packing, including food-packaging activities, and packing material requirements.

There are specific requirements for equipment, tools, buildings, and sanitation. In this subpart there are also requirements for transportation of covered produce, pest control, toilet and handwashing facilities, sewage disposal, litter management, plumbing, and domesticated animal excreta and litter.

Your first task is to find out if the produce safety rule applies to your farm, and then start working on your program.

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