

Checklist for Retail Purchasing of Local Fresh Produce

It is important for buyers of fresh, whole produce to have assurances that safe food handling practices were followed on the farm and during delivery to their facilities. Growers can provide documentation of food safety assurances through a buyer's onsite review of their farm, a certificate of attendance at good agricultural practices (GAPs) trainings or Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) workshops, or with documentation from a third-party audit.



While some growers must comply with the Produce Safety Rule of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) and attend PSA trainings, it is not required for all growers, such as for growers of products not typically consumed raw or produce that will be further processed. Completion of this checklist can provide documentation to the buyer that GAPs were followed on the farm, and that the buyer took reasonable care when purchasing fruits and vegetables directly from a grower. This checklist can also guide the conversation between retail buyers of fresh produce and local growers as they establish terms of the purchasing arrangement to ensure safe food practices are followed.

Items on this checklist are based on GAPs and elements of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule.

Name of Producer/Farm _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Total acres of fresh produce farmed _____ Availability of promotional materials YES NO

Products available for purchase:

Product Insurance Liability is held: YES (Dollar amount _____) NO

Is produce from the farm USDA Certified Organic? YES NO

(Note: USDA Certified Organic is a certification of practices and does not focus on food safety).

Is the farm USDA GAP certified or food safety third party certified
(such as SQF or GlobalGAP)? YES NO

Has the person in charge of the farm produce completed GAPs or PSA training? YES NO

Can buyers schedule a tour of the farm during the production season? YES NO

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Production Practices	Yes	No	N/A
Are wells protected from contamination?			
What is the source of irrigation water? <input type="checkbox"/> Well <input type="checkbox"/> Stream <input type="checkbox"/> Pond <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			
What method(s) of irrigation is used on the farm? <input type="checkbox"/> Drip <input type="checkbox"/> Overhead <input type="checkbox"/> Flood Note: <i>Drip is recommended for leafy greens.</i>			
Has an agricultural water assessment been completed, or has agricultural water been tested for presence of generic <i>E. coli</i> ?			
What types of manure are used on produce crops? <input type="checkbox"/> Raw manure <input type="checkbox"/> Composted <input type="checkbox"/> Aged <input type="checkbox"/> No manure is used			
Is the manure composted onsite or purchased commercially? <input type="checkbox"/> Onsite composting <input type="checkbox"/> Purchased commercially			
Is there documentation of composting methods used to validate the safety of the product?			
Is raw manure incorporated into soil two weeks prior to planting or 120 days prior to harvest to avoid raw manure from touching edible portion of the produce? (USDA Organic Standard)			
Is the manure application schedule documented and available?			
Is land use history available to determine risk of product contamination from sources such as runoff from upstream, flooding, chemical spills, or excessive agricultural crop application?			
Is the field protected from animal confinement or grazing area runoff?			
Is land that frequently floods used to grow food crops?			
Are there preventive procedures in place to protect fresh produce in the field from flooding?			
Are preventive measures in place to restrict livestock, domesticated animals, and wildlife from growing areas?			
Are portable toilets used in a way that prevents field contamination such as located away from growing areas on even ground surfaces and emptied regularly?			
Are there policies or procedures on how to deal with contaminated produce in the field?			
Product Handling	Yes	No	N/A
Is produce checked for signs of contamination from sources such as animal feces or footprints prior to harvest?			
Are baskets, totes, or other containers kept off the soil during harvesting?			
Are harvesting baskets, totes, or other containers kept covered and cleaned (with potable water) routinely?			
Is harvesting equipment, machinery, and tools that come into contact with produce crops kept as clean as possible?			
Do procedures used in field packing of produce items minimize risk of contamination? Examples would include elevation of boxes from the ground or wearing of clean gloves?			
Are the same containers used for produce items typically eaten raw and other produce? If so, are containers cleaned and sanitized between uses?			
Is dirt, mud, or other debris removed from product before packing?			
Are there policies or procedures in place about how to deal with contaminated produce during packing?			
Is the water used for cleaning products after harvest from a tested, potable water source?			
Are food-grade packaging materials stored in areas protected from pets, livestock, wild animals, and other contaminants?			
Is product protected from contamination as it travels from field to packing facility?			

Facilities	Yes	No	N/A
What source of water is used for cleaning purposes on the farm? <input type="checkbox"/> Well <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Is this water source tested for generic <i>E. coli</i> at least once per year with results kept on file?			
Are temperatures of storage coolers monitored and documented?			
Is a product packing area in use? Is there space for culling and storage of produce?			
Are packing and storage facilities located away from growing areas?			
Are packing areas protected from wild and domestic animals?			
Are food grade packaging materials used?			
Are toilets and hand washing stations that use potable water cleaned and serviced routinely?			
Is a pest control program in place?			
Are there standard operating procedures for cleaning and sanitizing?			
Are cleaning and sanitizing procedures routinely followed with food contact surfaces regularly washed and rinsed with potable water, and then sanitized?			
Are there policies or procedures on how to manage human waste spills, including septic spills?			

Worker Health and Hygiene	Yes	No	N/A
Is a worker food safety training program in place with records of dates, topics, and participants?			
Are workers trained about hygiene practices and sanitation?			
Is smoking and eating confined to designated areas separate from product handling?			
Are adequate restroom facilities with washing facilities (potable water, soap, and disposable towels) readily available for all workers or anyone who touches the product? <i>Note: OSHA requires one toilet and one handwashing facility per every 20 workers within ¼ mile of the working area.</i>			
Do workers practice good hygiene when harvesting and packing product by:			
Wearing clean clothing and shoes daily?			
Keeping hair covered or restrained?			
Not wearing jewelry in the packing area?			
Washing hands after touching soiled surfaces, using the toilet, and before handling produce?			
Covering open wounds with clean bandages and another protective layer such as a disposable glove?			

Transportation	Yes	No	N/A
Is the product kept protected from physical damage and contamination during transit to customers?			
Is the transport vehicle inspected for cleanliness before loading product?			
Is there a cleaning schedule for the transport vehicle, and is there documentation to show it is followed?			
Are there designated areas in transport vehicles for storage of food products and non-food items to avoid the risk of cross-contamination?			
Does the transportation schedule mitigate risk of temperature abuse of products?			

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, the information provided is accurate.

Signature of Seller: _____ Date _____



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Photos by Linda Naeve.

FS 0030 Revised March 2025

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