

NHDAMF PRODUCE SAFETY PROGRAM

“What to Expect of a Regulatory Produce Inspection”

A Guide for New Hampshire for Farms

The NHDAMF Produce Safety Program is responsible for the education and enforcement of Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). This new farm inspection program is focused on promoting food safety and preventing foodborne illnesses linked to fresh produce.

Routine inspections will begin in summer 2019. All initial inspections will be educational unless an egregious condition, where visible and route of contamination, is observed. Such conditions must be considered serious and likely to pose an imminent public health risk. This program is federally funded, so farms that must be inspected will not be charged a fee. If you have additional questions, please contact: Victoria Smith, Produce Safety Program Planner, (603) 848-4781; Victoria.smith@agr.nh.gov

Initial Contact

A NHDAMF inspector may contact your farm to help determine whether a produce inspection is required. During the pre-inspection call, the inspector will ask questions to make a preliminary determination about whether the Produce Safety Rule ([PSR](#)) applies to your farm.

Questions to anticipate:

- Do you grow, harvest, pack or hold produce?
- What is the average size of your farm?
- Where do you sell the majority of your produce?
- Is your produce grown for commercial processing?
- Do you sell any other food product?

If exemptions apply, the inspector may request records that support your exemption status. In some cases, this may involve a scheduled farm visit to verify your records in-person. However, exempt and qualified exempt farms will **not** be subject to a full, routine produce inspection.

If no exemptions apply, the inspector will conduct a pre-inspection call to further explain inspection expectations and prepare your for their visit. All inspections must occur during the growing, harvest and packing times.

Routine Produce Inspection

The inspector will:

- Schedule an inspection date that works for both the inspector and the person in charge
- Request the person responsible for produce safety, plan on accompanying the inspector during the inspection
- Explain the general flow of the inspection, what the inspection will cover and records that may be reviewed
- Ask if your farm has any biosecurity practices, hazards, safety protocols, and other requirements that inspectors need to be aware of and adhere to before the visit

Initial Interview

The inspector will provide you with a brief description of the reason for and scope of the inspection and activities to be conducted during the inspection. The time an inspection takes depends on the type of inspection, farm activities, size of the farm, observations during the inspection. The inspector will ask you about the activities performed the day(s) of the inspection, such as whether the farm is planting, harvesting, packing or holding and about the farm's organization.

The Walk-Through

The inspector will need to observe farm operations, but may also ask about farming practices or operations they cannot observe during the inspections. They will take notes, review farm documents such as training and sanitation records and may take pictures.

Throughout the inspection, the inspector will explain what is being looked at and why. If there are any regulatory concerns, the inspector will discuss them with you and explain the reason(s) for each regulatory concern and the public health significance.

Exit Interview

The Exit Interview will be conducted at the end of the inspection. The inspector will review any regulatory concerns and findings, and provide you with information on resources and technical assistance. If you are able to make corrections during the inspection, these will be documented. If the deficiency cannot be corrected during the inspection, the inspector will work with you to determine a reasonable time frame to implement preventive measures and corrective actions. The inspector will also identify preventive produce safety practices and conditions on your farm that align with the requirements of the PSR. A copy of the inspection sheet with agency

Will there be Unannounced Inspections?

Routine inspections will be announced and scheduled; unannounced inspections **may** be conducted if:

- 1) Your farm is unresponsive (no contact within five (5) business days after reasonable contact attempts have been made) or unwilling to set a date for the inspection.
- 2) Your farm has had produce safety issues in the past and the issue has not been corrected.
- 3) A follow-up inspection is needed and an unannounced inspection may work best to observe the necessary changes being made.
- 4) Your farm is linked to a complaint, recall, or foodborne outbreak investigation.

Does the PSR apply to your farm?

- Utilize the FDA decision tree entitled "[Standards for Produce Safety, Coverage and Exemptions/Exclusions](#)" found at [FSMA FARM EXEMPTIONS](#)