
Food Safety for Pick Your Own Operations

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Pick Your Own Operations are simply farms with additional risks...and revenue.

GAP and GMP food safety programs apply, but there are several additional risks that must be addressed.

Why Do We Need Food Safety Certification?

Food Quality is an option.

Good quality is something we hope for and base buying practices upon.

Food Safety is an entitlement!

We have the right to expect that food is safe!

What Can We Do To Minimize Risks?

Focus on risk reduction, not risk elimination.

“Current technologies cannot eliminate all potential food safety hazards associated with fresh produce that will be eaten raw.”

Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

**PREVENTION
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**is the KEY to Reducing
Microbial Contamination**

Unique Hurdles of a Pick Your Own Operation

People

- People are a huge source of contamination
 - How do you control that as much as possible?
- Growers following GAPs and GMPs should train and encourage customers to do the same
 - Create policies and then enforce them;
 - Hand wash
 - No food or drink allowed in the field or orchard
 - No Pets in field or orchard

People

- Customer education is an important component in minimizing contamination risks
- You won't insult the customers by asking to "wash their hands before entering the field or orchard"
 - Many of them will be reassured in your concern
- Small signs can be placed in and around the operation giving direction and warning

Wash Hands

- Wash Hands
 - Have hand wash stations at the entrance of the field and ask everyone to use them
 - Before picking fruit
 - After every visit to the bathroom
 - After a break or a meal
 - After hand-to-face contact (e.g., coughing, sneezing, blowing nose)
 - After handling any materials other than the berries.

Wash Hands

- What if there is no water?
 - Use hand wipes to remove soil.
 - Use hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer is good, but secondary
- You wash your hands but make sure you make your customers and the little one's

People

- Infants and toddlers
 - The children are not the issue...the diaper is.
 - Discourage diaper changing in the field/orchard
 - All children must be with an adult
 - Offer alternatives for time occupation
 - Sand box, train, playground
- No food or drink allowed in the field or orchard
 - May want to offer a picnic area or porch/pavillion

Bathrooms

- Provide adequate toilet facilities with hand wash stations
 - Liquid, antibacterial soap
 - Single use hand towels & trash can
- Separate facilities should be acceptable, IF hand wash facilities are a close to the bathroom and between the bathroom and picking operation
 - Facilities should be serviced regularly and cleaned daily
- Enforce use of bathroom facilities
 - Being on a farm, there may be some younger ones that think nature should take it's course in nature

People

- Ask them not to pick berries that have fallen on the ground.
- Designate a picking area and enforce it
- Dispose of garbage in the trash bin provided

Animals

- NO Pets allowed in the field or orchard
 - May want to consider offering a dog park in an area away from the harvest area
- Petting zoos or other animals
 - Down hill from produce
 - Create a sizeable buffer zone around the field or orchard to keep the animals and their droppings away

Animals

- If there is a petting zoo, ask everyone to wash their hands before allowing them into the field or orchard
- Before customers are allowed in the field or orchard, inspect the produce for bird and wildlife droppings
 - Remove any contaminated produce and the area around it....splatter.

Picking Containers

- Offer clean containers to pick into
- Reusable Containers
 - Wash/sanitize after every person OR before the start of the next day
 - Prevent the build up of human and other pathogens
 - Prevent the cross contamination of “germs” from day to day
- Storage of ALL packing materials must be in a clean and sanitary manner
 - Kept off the floor, dirt/dust/physical contaminant free

Water

- Water Quality
 - Take water samples of all water sources used for human consumption as well as irrigation/freeze protection/pesticide application
- Water Sources
 - Wells or Ponds/streams/rivers
 - Is it properly constructed?
 - Is this the same water source to irrigate or frost protect that the buffalo use to drink and swim?

Water

- Irrigation Method
 - Overhead vs. Drip
 - Is it the safest method for your produce?

Pesticide and Fertilizers

- Keep record of pesticide and fertilizer applications
 - Post pesticide application signs, even when not open.
 - If you are known as Pick Your Own...people will be snooping

GAPs and GHPs

- Train your workers in good hygiene and health practices
- Institute a GAPs/GHPs program
 - Keep records of all the GAPs and GHPs
- Lots of advertising and smiles!