

Scheduling A Produce Farm Inspection



This job aide is designed to provide a checklist of items to be covered when calling a grower to schedule a produce farm inspection. The items may vary depending on individual situations.

Introduction

- ✓ Identify yourself and ask to speak to the farm's primary contact regarding produce safety.
 - Primary contact for the farm may be different than the primary contact for produce safety.
 - If you talk with the farm's primary contact, encourage them to also reach out to the produce safety contact to let them know you are coming.
- ✓ Introduce yourself including your name, title, and agency.
- ✓ Let them know you are calling to schedule a mandatory Produce Safety Rule Inspection and to determine the date and time you will be coming.
 - Be prepared to discuss the differences between an inspection and an audit.
 - Explain this is not an audit.
 - Required based on the new federal rule called the Produce Safety Rule.
 - No permit or license being issued (this may be state specific).
- ✓ Confirm the farm's primary and produce safety contact information
 - Primary Farm Contact - First and last name, role, phone number, and email address.
 - Primary Contact for Produce Safety - First and last name, role, phone number, and email address.
 - Confirm the farm's physical and mailing address.



Identifying Farm Status

- ✓ Inform the grower that you need to ask a few questions, prior to a visit, to verify the farm is required to have an inspection.
 - Ask the questions on the FDA decision tree [Coverage and Exemptions/Exclusions for the Produce Safety Rule](#).
 - Ask if someone from the farm has been to the training and, if not, provide a list of training dates and location. [Produce Safety Alliance Upcoming Grower Trainings](#)
 - If determined that the farm is eligible for a qualified exemption, engage in conversation as to what this means and records required located in [Records Required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule](#). Explain what they need to do as a qualified exempt farm and changes that would require them to be inspected.
 - States may choose to email or mail state information if applicable.
 - If applicable in your jurisdiction, ask the farm contact to provide paperwork to verify they are qualified exempt.
 - If determined that the farm is not covered by the rule, engage in conversation as to what this means to the farm. Explain what they need to do in the event there are changes in farm activities that would require them to be inspected.
 - States may choose to email or mail state information if applicable.
 - Thank the grower for their time and end the call.
- ✓ When calling in year 2 and beyond, verify if the farm's coverage and/or size has changed to determine if the farm is covered and whether an inspection is required.



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If Determined to be a Covered Farm

- ✓ When it has been determined the farm is covered by the Produce Safety Rule and will require an inspection:
 - Inquire when and what they expect to be harvesting or packing and then coordinate and set the inspection date and time when at least a subset of these activities can be observed.
 - Provide a high-level overview of the goals and purpose of the inspection.
 - Explain the general flow of the inspection.
 - Explain the farms key personnel will need to be present during the entire inspection.
 - Provide an overview of the records which will be reviewed. Ensure the records will be on site or available for review electronically.

Final Actions during the Call

- ✓ Confirm directions to the farm or meeting location and determine the specific location where you should meet.
- ✓ Provide the number of team members your will be bringing on the inspection.
- ✓ Ask about farm security such as phyto-sanitary measures (i.e. greenhouse plant protection protocols or measures required to prevent the spread of plant disease), bio-security practices (livestock), and visitor policies or farm rules required by the farm. If the farm does not require any security practices you should evaluate and implement good practices to help prevent the spread of disease, particularly if you are visiting more than one farm per day. Are there any potential safety hazards we should be aware of and prepare for during the inspection (dogs, pesticide applications posted for no re-entry, for example)?
- ✓ Ask the grower if they have any questions or concerns and if so, address them.
- ✓ Confirm the best means of communication on the day of inspection should you need to make contact (phone, text, email).
- ✓ Tell them you will be sending an email/text/letter confirmation of date and time along with some additional resources that may benefit them prior to your arrival. (Send to the primary contact and produce safety contact.)
- ✓ Thank the grower for their time and end the call.

After the Call

- ✓ Email/text/mail the primary contact to confirm the date and time and attach a limited number of documents which may prepare them for your visit. Be sure to keep the emails scope beneficial, brief and relative.
 - States should update their farm inventory information.

Documents Which May be Beneficial to Email/Text/Mail to the Farm

- ➔ **What to Expect of a Regulatory Inspection?** <https://www.fda.gov/media/124328/download>
- ➔ **Records Required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule**
<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/sites/producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/Records-Required-by-the-FSMA-PSR.pdf>
- ➔ **Coverage and Exemptions/Exclusions for the Produce Safety Rule**
<https://www.fda.gov/media/94332/download>
- ➔ **Produce Safety Alliance Upcoming Grower Trainings**
<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training/grower-training-courses/upcoming-grower-trainings/>
- ➔ Any other specific documentation as applicable.

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