

Preparing for an On-Farm Readiness Review



If you are looking for guidance on how to best prepare your farm for a Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule (21 CFR § 112) inspection or are interested in enhancing produce safety on your farm, an On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR) is right for you!

NOTE: If you are just beginning to grow produce or would like a refresher regarding food safety you might want to consider starting with the Produce Safety Risk Assessment. A local Produce Safety Technician in your area can assist you.

Contact information is available at www.michigan.gov/producesafety.



What to Expect:

What is an On-Farm Readiness Review?

An On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR) is a non-regulatory, free assessment of a farm's readiness for inspection under the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. This is a chance for you to have a one-on-one conversation and farm walk-around with Produce Safety Rule experts to evaluate pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest conditions and practices; assess what you are doing well; and identify areas for improvement in food safety practices on your farm. It is very important that routine farm processes and operations (such as washing, packing, and harvesting activities) are happening during the OFRR so reviewers can make accurate recommendations for produce safety improvements specific to your farm.

Who conducts On-Farm Readiness Reviews?

On-Farm Readiness Reviews will be conducted jointly with a minimum of two out of the following three agencies: the Produce Safety Team at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan State University Extension and Conservation District Produce Safety Technicians.

How is an On-Farm Readiness Review different from an audit or inspection?

An On-Farm Readiness Review is not a regulatory visit. The OFRR is a voluntary and confidential on-site visit and was developed to increase education of food safety on your farm, identify opportunities for improvement, and prepare you for a FSMA Produce Safety Rule inspection (if applicable). All notes taken by the reviewers will be left with the farm at the end of the visit to prevent potential issues with the Freedom of Information Act.

What should I do to prepare for an On-Farm Readiness Review?

We strongly recommend that at least one person from your farm complete the Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training Course before scheduling an OFRR. The PSA Grower Training will provide you with essential background knowledge about the FSMA Produce Safety Rule and recommended produce safety practices that will help you to get the most out of the OFRR. In addition, this training satisfies the FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirement for covered farms that "at least one supervisor or responsible party" completes "food safety training... recognized as adequate" by FDA (21 C.F.R. §112.22(c)).

Learn more at:

<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/training/grower-training-courses>.

Preparing for an On-Farm Readiness Review, continued

If my farm is not covered under the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, can I still request an On-Farm Readiness Review?

Yes. Any farm that grows and/or sells produce is eligible to request an On-Farm Readiness Review. However, farms that currently fall under the Produce Safety Rule will be given first availability. In addition, farms that are small or just beginning production should start with the Produce Safety Risk Assessment. Please visit www.michigan.gov/producesafety for more information.

What happens during an On-Farm Readiness Review?

- Reviewers will first ask a series of questions to better understand your farm's produce safety practices and farm procedures.
- Reviewers will ask to view different areas of the farm to view harvesting, washing, and packing processes as well as storage or holding areas.
- At the end of the visit, reviewers will provide feedback on observations and identify priority areas for improvement in produce safety practices on your farm.
- Produce Safety Technicians, MSU Extension staff, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can provide additional technical assistance based on the feedback from your On-Farm Readiness Review, which may involve follow up information sharing or additional farm visits.

What if a public health hazard is found during my On-Farm Readiness Review?

In the rare instance that we observe a serious condition that could be considered "egregious" (an imminent public health hazard is posed if a corrective action is not taken immediately), and if the product has not entered commerce and the issue can be immediately addressed, reviewers will not notify FDA or any other state or federal agency, nor will a written record be made. It is our intention to immediately address any serious concerns on-site.

How do I sign-up for an On-Farm Readiness Review?

To request an On-Farm Readiness Review, contact Heather Borden at OFRR@msu.edu or 517-768-2038.

Where should I go for more information?

Contact the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development at:
www.Michigan.gov/producesafety.

The Produce Safety Alliance resources at <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/> are a great starting point for learning more about produce safety.

Funding for this statement, publication, press release, etc., was made possible, in part, by the Food and Drug Administration through grant PAR-16-137. The views expressed in written materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does any mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organization imply endorsement by the United States Government.

