

*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 growing produce safety on your farm, an On-Farm Readiness Review is right for you!*

## **What to Expect During an On-Farm Readiness Review**

### **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 by the Produce Program Team at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets and Produce Safety Specialists from University of Vermont (UVM) Extension.

### **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 for your benefit and will consist of on-farm observation to identify areas for produce safety improvements, to help you prepare for a FSMA Produce Safety Rule inspection (if applicable), and to help you grow produce safety practices on your farm. Reviewers are not there to conduct an audit, inspection, or any type of regulatory assessment. All notes taken by the reviewers will be left with the farm at the end of the visit.

### **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>

Before the OFRR, review the PSA Grower Training Manual from the Grower Training Course (see above) and your farm's food safety plan, if you have one. Write down any questions you have ahead of time.



### **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. Remember, an On-Farm Readiness Review is for your benefit. Reviewers will suggest produce safety improvements so you can make informed decisions about your farm.

### **What happens during an On-Farm Readiness Review?**

1. Reviewers will begin by asking a series of questions to better understand your farm's produce safety practices and farm procedures.
2. Reviewers will ask to view different areas of the farm to view harvesting, washing, and packing processes as well as storage or holding areas.
3. 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.
4. UVM Extension staff 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), if the product has not entered commerce and the issue can be immediately addressed, reviewers will not notify FDA or any other state/federal agency, nor will a written record will 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 enroll your farm the Vermont Produce Portal at <http://agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram> and check the box next to “On-Farm Readiness Review.” A team member from the Produce Program will then get in touch with you to schedule your On-Farm Readiness Review.

### **Where should I go for more information?**

Contact the Vermont Produce Program at [AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.FSMA@vermont.gov) or (802) 828-2433 with questions or to learn more about On-Farm Readiness Reviews. The resources listed below are great starting points for learning more about produce safety.

- **Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets – Produce Program**  
<http://agriculture.vermont.gov/ProduceProgram>
- **UVM Extension – Practical Produce Safety**  
[www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/?Page=whatwedo/producesafety/PPSManual.html](http://www.uvm.edu/sustainableagriculture/?Page=whatwedo/producesafety/PPSManual.html)
- **UVM Extension AgEngineering Blog – Taking the Produce Safety Rule with You**  
<http://go.uvm.edu/psrtogo>
- **Produce Safety Alliance**  
<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/>

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