

Sent to farms subject to the Produce Safety Rule on 4/13/2020

SUBJECT: VT Agency of Agriculture: Produce safety inspections delayed due to COVID-19

Dear Grower,

We're writing to share important information about produce safety farm inspections and COVID-19 resources.

Routine Produce Safety Inspections are Delayed until Further Notice

Routine inspections on produce farms for assessing compliance with the Produce Safety Rule are delayed until further notice due to COVID-19. The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets expects to resume inspections later this year and will be in touch with those farms due for inspection (see below) when further information becomes available. At this point, inspections are not expected to resume until at least after the current deadline of May 15th in the Governor's addendum to the [Stay Home, Stay Safe executive order](#). Further information about inspections will be updated on the Agency's [Produce Inspections webpage](#).

Farms requiring inspection in 2020 include:

- Farms subject to the Produce Safety Rule with annual produce sales greater than \$500k due for routine inspection.
- Farms subject to the Produce Safety Rule with annual produce sales between \$250-\$500k due for initial inspection.

Farms are still expected to follow the [Produce Safety Rule requirements](#) to ensure safe food production. In fact, the produce safety practices required by the Rule are more crucial than ever during the current COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to following the COVID-19 guidelines from the CDC, FDA, and Vermont Department of Health (see COVID-19 Resources below), farms subject to the Produce Safety Rule must continue to:

- Provide annual food safety training to farm workers;
- Ensure workers follow food safety and hygiene practices (including frequent handwashing and staying home when sick);
- Routinely clean and sanitize food contact surfaces;
- Maintain required records;
- And follow other produce safety practices required by the Rule.

If you have questions please contact Tucker Diego at tucker.diego@vermont.gov or (802) 622-4412.

COVID-19 Resources

Visit the Agency's [COVID-19 webpage](#) for resources related to COVID-19, including a section on produce-specific information. Resources are updated regularly; check back for the most up-to-date information. For COVID-19 questions please contact agr.covidresponse@vermont.gov.

Sincerely,

The Produce Program team
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