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Food Safety Plan Template Guide

This guide is designed to help you navigate through your food safety plan. If there is a portion that does not apply to your operation, put an X through that box on the checklist and delete from the template.

Helpful Hints

D=Document
Any question designated with a D requires a combination of written standard operating procedures outlining company policies and procedures, records of actions taken, and/or other documents which may be necessary to support the food safety plan

P=Policy
Any question designated with a P requires a written policy or procedure to appear in the operation's food safety plan.

R=Records
Any question designated with a R requires a record which shows a process has been completed or record an action taken.

O=Observation
Any question designated with a O requires the auditor to take note if it is taking place or not. (This in not formally in the audit, but we added this portion to help you understand.)

Gather the following documents

1. A farm map
    a. Your farm map is a snapshot of your entire operation. This includes all buildings, fields, roads, and water sources/features (wells, irrigation heads, streams, ponds). Google Maps can be used to obtain an aerial view of the property and notes can be taken on the printed copy. Other options include: a hand drawn map, computer generated map using clipart in paint or another platform, or drone pictures.
        i. If your field changes from season to season or year to year, update your map and file previous maps for your records.
        ii. The maps don't have to be fancy. You don't have to be an artist or a graphic designer.
2. Maps of all buildings
    a. Each building map must include a flow of the building. A list of buildings includes office building/home, storage buildings/sheds, and packing houses.
        i. Label each building and mark what is in it, such as power/water connections, fuse boxes, chemical storage areas, break areas, storage areas, offices, restrooms/sinks, etc. Like the farm maps, it does not need to be fancy.
        ii. Draw a packing line/washing area flow diagram on the relevant map. Show where you box/bag up produce from where field harvest bins/trailers come in and where the finished product goes out before it leaves the farm. Include

all coolers, storage areas, and break/rest areas. It is important to note the flow of the products through the packing facility.

3. Training certificates for personnel in charge of food safety and any employees who apply pesticides.
4. Emergency contact information for key people such as the farm owner, farm manager, food safety manager, supervisors, attorney, insurance agent, etc. (information placed on cover sheet and accessory document).
5. Log sheets
6. Information on your water sources such as application and test results
7. Organic farm production plan

Farm Description

Questions: What is the name of your farm? What is the physical address of the farm and the longitude and latitude? Type of business? Who is the farm owner with contact information? Who is the farm manager with contact information? Are there any other important personnel? Where is the farm located? What is the total acreage? What are the agricultural activities conducted on this site? What crops are grown? What water sources are used? How many employees do you have? What are your harvest months (peak employment)? What type of packing facility is used? Any other vital information (sold on farm, U-pick, farmer's market, etc.)?

Farm Map

Draw a detailed map of your operation be sure to label toilet facilities, handwashing stations, wells, packing house, fields, water sources, etc. Include lot identification codes. Know the total acreage farmed and commodities produced. It would be helpful to not include numbers/codes on your map. Google Maps can be used to help develop a map. Also, make sure to have floor plans of other buildings. **(O)**

General Section

Traceability

Traceability is the ability to track a food product through the food production and distribution system. In the case of fruits and vegetables, this includes back to the field where it was grown and any subsequent handling, storage, and sale.

A functional traceability system allows you to trace your product one step forward and one step back. If you are a fresh produce grower, this means you know what field a particular lot came from, the day it was harvested, and when and to whom that lot was sold to. In the event there is a foodborne illness outbreak, you will be able to identify what products you have in the marketplace and recall the product if necessary. The traceability system can be developed from a system you already have in place based on invoicing and harvest dates. Although it can be very high tech with bar codes and computers, it does not need to be. The important part is to know what product went where on what day.

It is seemingly impossible to track every individual who buys your product if you sell at a farmer's market or have a self-service farm stand. In this case, keep track of what you took to market (where it came from and when it was harvested) and document what was sold (date and location). Essentially, the market becomes the step forward. If you have an on-farm market, keep track of what you put out and how much is sold each day. The benefit to this is that it will help you keep first in-first out in your coolers and keep the inventory moving. If you are selling newly harvested crops, just document on a clip board how much you put out and sold that day.

As an example, you can create a diagram/field map to reference and use a harvest log that gives locations of field and/or plots where product came from, the date it was harvested, packed, and sold. If you attend multiple markets, you can number the markets and reference the market number where it was sold. Use this to help simplify the method you use to create a reasonable traceability procedure.

The traceability codes should be traceable on invoices delivered to the customers by date identification. Each date code label will correspond to a certain harvest period, person, and field.

Here is an example of a system you could use.

Our farm utilizes a [DESCRIBE YOUR SYSTEM HERE] traceability system that allows us to trace the product one step back (field) and one step forward (customer). All traceability information is recorded on the **Traceability Log**. **(G-1)**

For example: when selling cases to a buyer use a sticker on each box/bag etc.

Each case of produce packed has a sticker that identifies:

- Who packed the produce (Crew #, group, individual)?
- The field it came from
- The date it was harvested
- The date it was packed
- Corresponding ID# on the package
- The date of shipment

Mock Recall

For a mock recall for a direct market farm, you follow where the product went (one step forward) and where the product came from, meaning which field/plot (one step back). Below is a description of how you label and identify lots (units). Lot identification/labels should be able to link each individual lot to the:

- Grower(s)
- Field (location)
- Date harvested or date received if co-packing
- Individuals involved in harvesting
- Total number of packages in the lot
- Shipping and receiving dates

To test our recall plan, we conduct a mock recall once a year, usually in [month]. In the mock recall, a buyer is contacted and asked to identify a load received from our company. We ask how much of the product has been sold and how much they still have in inventory. This information is recorded in our **Mock Recall Log** and kept on file. (G-2 **R**)

Drinking water policy

All employees will have access to potable water. Potable: meets the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) drinking water standards including an absence of total coliforms. (G-3 **R**)

Where and when do you supply employees with potable drinking water?

_____

_____

_____

Employee Trainings

What trainings do you require your employees to attend? When do you offer these trainings? Do you offer refresher courses and how often? (G-5 **D**) All trainings must be provided in the language of the employees.

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_____

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_____

Employee and Visitor Hygiene Policies

Employee Policies

Clothing, Jewelry, and Cell Phone Policy

Do you require employees to wear hair nets? If so, when? Do you have a no jewelry policy? If so, elaborate. Do you require employees to have short nails and no nail polish? Do you require gloves to be worn during certain parts of the operation? Do you require employees to wear clean clothing? Aprons? Supplied clothing? Cellphone policy? (3-12 **O,** 3-13&14 **P**)

Break Policy

What is your policy on breaks? Smoking? Eating? Where are your break areas? (G-11 **P**)

Employees must follow what your policy states. (G-6 **O**)

Visitor Policy

Define what a visitor is vs. a customer just picking up product from farm (CSA pickup). Long term visitor vs. short term.

What is your definition of a visitor (example: a person on the farm longer than 15 minutes that is not an employee?) Do you require visitors to sign in and out? How will you monitor visitors? (G4 **P**)

Develop a short company visitor policy.

Visitors will wash their hands upon entering the farm. They will wear hair protection in the form of a hat or hair net. Visitors are not allowed to pick produce or handle product without the expressed permission of the host. All visitors will sign in upon arrival and sign out prior to departure. Visitors must sign in and be escorted through the property. You can decide whether you allow jewelry, nail polish, etc. Make sure you state whether you have a policy on footwear and what that policy is.

Aside: For U pick or pick your own operations, you may want to have a visitor policy that addresses visitors. Issues that may want to be covered include location of toilet and hand washing facilities, whether or not you allow personal containers in the field such as glass bowls, etc.)

Pick your own visitor policy: All farm policies applicable to pick your own customers are posted at the entrance to the field so that they are aware of farm policy.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Members: All CSA members and their families are given a copy of company policy when they join the CSA, and a sign is posted in the field to remind them of proper behavior.

Post your farm rules for visitors and CSA participants.

Visitors must follow what your policy states. (G-6 **O**)

Handwashing and Toilet Facilities

Who is responsible for checking these facilities? What are they monitoring for? Where does this water come from? How often is it checked and stocked? Where is this information recorded? (G-9 **O** & G-10 **R**)

Record locations on Farm map.

Handwashing

Water used for handwashing in field sanitation units is not required to meet EPA potability standards if chlorine or other acceptable agents are added to reduce the possibility of microbial contamination.

When must employees wash their hands? (G-7 **O** & G-8 **O**)

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Display proper handwashing technique or signage for when employees must wash their hands.

Proper hand-washing technique includes the following:

- Wet hands with clean water (warm water is preferred, if available), apply soap, and work up a lather.
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
- Clean under the nails and between the fingers.
- Rub fingertips of each hand in suds on palm of opposite hand.
- Rinse under clean, running water.
- Dry hands with a single-use towel.

It is important to remember to wash hands after touching any potentially unsanitary surface. When possible, turn off the faucet with the single-use towel instead of directly with the hand when using a sink and faucet that is not automatic or knee operated.

Do NOT use a paper towel more than once or share towels with others.

Toilet Facilities

If you have a significant number of farm workers and must meet OSHA requirements, be sure you have the appropriate number of toilets to meet the federal requirements. [20:1]

What is the ratio of employees to useable toilet facilities?_____:_____

Indoor facilities can be used in small operations if within ¼ mile walking distance from fields or if transportation is readily provided.

Cleaning and servicing of the unit may be contracted with a sanitation unit rental company. If this is the case, documentation will be provided by and collected from the contracted company. A representative map may be provided showing where the sanitation unit(s) is located relative to the agricultural plots.

Illness and Injury Policies

First Aid Procedures

What are your procedures of an injury on the farm? Who is it reported to? How is it handled? Where is it documented? Where is the first aid kit? How often is the first aid kit checked and restocked? Who oversees this task? (G-14 **P)**

Blood and Bodily Fluid

How do you handle blood or bodily fluids in the field or on produce? Where is the waste discarded? Where is it documented? (G-13 **P)**

Illness

Who monitors staff for symptoms of an illness? What symptoms do supervisors look for? What is the protocol for an ill employee? Where is this information recorded? (G-12 **P**)

Employee Food Safety and Security Empowerment

Do employees know that they must share information in regards to food safety and security? Do they know what to take note of? Who do they notify?

Agricultural Chemicals and Plant Protection Products

Chemical Application and Recordkeeping

What chemicals are on your farm? Who applies these chemicals? Are they licensed if it is a regulated chemical? Are they trained if it is a nonregulated chemical? Where are the licenses and trainings documented? What records do you keep about the chemicals? Is the water used with the chemicals safe? (G-15 **R**)

Chemical General Usage and Storage

What chemicals are used on your farm? Who applies these chemicals? Are they licensed if it is a regulated chemical? Are they trained if it is a nonregulated chemical? Where are the licenses and trainings documented? What records do you keep about the chemicals?

Usage and Storage Even OMRI (organic materials review institute) approved substances may not be safe to have around ready to eat produce.

Pest Monitoring for Chemical Application Decisions

What are your protocols? Do you have a pest program? Do you have contract with a company? What types of chemicals do you use for pest? Who applies them?

Farm Review

Irrigation Water and Water Used for Topical Sprays

What types of irrigation systems do you use? Where does the water come from (sources)? Do you test the water? Do you record the results? Corrective action? (1-3 **D,** 1-4 **D,** & 1-5 **O**)

Aside: All irrigation water and water used to mix topical/pesticide/ protective sprays should be tested for generic *E. coli* and the tests should be quantified. Depending on the source, the frequency of testing will vary.

Frequency:

Municipal: Obtain a copy of testing results at least yearly from your county/municipality and keep it on record.

Well: At least, once per year during production.

Inspect well, especially shallow or hand dug wells for contamination when in low lying areas or near potential runoff that can come into contact with water. Inspect cap to make sure it is intact.

Surface: At least three times per year per source. Recommended sampling times include at the beginning of irrigation, high use, and two days prior to last irrigation event.

Testing Protocols: Contact a reputable lab to test your water. Follow their instructions for taking the sample and submitting the sample. Here are some general guidelines to help you understand what labs may offer or ask you when you attempt to have your water tested.

100 ml sample; quantified generic *E. coli* using EPA certified methods.

Preferred method is Coli-lert with an upper limit of 2400 CFU/100 ml, no more than 24 hour hold time on sample, prefer 6-8 hour hold. Use sterile sample container, wash hands before collection, collect at a consistent place using a consistent method, and follow lab recommendations. May need to make a cup on stick for water recovery or purchase a water sampling tool.

Other EPA approved methods: mTec, modified mTec, mColiBlue

Not EPA approved but common: petri film (1 ml sample size), SimPlate

Consideration: overhead vs. trickle based on type of crop, plant growth stage, and days before harvest. Look to minimize risk when making decisions.

Sewage Treatment

Are the packinghouse toilets located away from the packing area? Do all restrooms have floor drains to control any toilet overflow or sanitation leak? Do these drains go to a private septic system that is properly maintained? (1-6 **O**)

Are there municipal sewage treatment facilities or waste material landfills adjacent to the farm? (1-7 **O**)

Animals

Personal

What is your policy on animals on the farm?

If your operation is open to the public, then service animals are allowed. This includes U-pick operations, roadside stands, on-site restaurants, etc. There is a difference between service animals and therapy animals. Service animal will be dressed accordingly. By law, you cannot ask someone what their disability is or reasoning for having a service animal.

Livestock

Rotations with livestock – treat the same as 120-day raw manure rule.

If livestock are grazed nearby, inspect, and provide filter strips to separate livestock areas from production areas in the event of washout from rain event. Look at slope of land and adjust cropping strategies accordingly.

If farming with horses/oxen, or mules, timing and special considerations will be critical. How do you deal with manure from a working animal? Field preparation prior to planting, cultivation, and plant stage of growth, 120-day rule directs that in these cases, manure must be avoided from contaminating crop. There are options such as bunt bags to catch poop or a bucket and shovel. The important thing is to have a plan to make sure manure and urine do not get on fresh produce either by direct deposition or through splatter. Have a plan, follow the plan, and document your actions.

Do you have livestock on the property or next to the fields? Who monitors? What steps are taken to ensure safety? (1-8 to 1-11 **O**)

Wildlife

You could identify species of concern and methods that are currently being used to deter them. A pre-harvest survey could also be added to ensure fields have not had significant animal activity.
Significant animal activity means that there is not noticeable fecal material or crop destruction due to animal traffic. If fecal evidence is found, you can mark off an area of defined distance around the fecal material and harvest outside the perimeter. The distance will likely vary by crop. A starting distance to consider might be 5 feet radius around the fecal material. Be sure to include this information in your plan or as an SOP.

Deterrents such as coyote/decoys, when used actively are quite effective in “repelling” deer, geese, and groundhogs. Training deer to feed on soy or bush beans using planting barriers between where the deer enter the throughout production field.

Geese are deterred from ponds using swan decoys and coyote decoys. To reduce nesting, mow down tall grass from around ponds.

What types of wildlife affects your property? Have you noticed tracks or scat? Do you have fencing? Do you use deterrents or traps? Is what you are doing working for your operation? What is your plan if there is a problem? Who monitors/inspects? Is this information documented and where? (1-12 and 1-13 R)

Fence and Field Inspections

Note any signs of animal activity while carrying out everyday farming activities, walk through or around the fields daily and note signs of animals passing through or feeding in the fields. Inspect the fence lines regularly.

Do you have fencing? Who is in charge of checking fencing? Who takes care of repairs? Is this information documented and where?

Manure

- ☐ If not using manure at all, state in the farm food safety plan. **(Option C, 1-22)**
  No animal manure or municipal bio-solids are used on the farm.

- ☐ If using raw manure, outline exact usage.
  Raw manure (un-composted) is applied and incorporated [days prior to] harvest. Raw manure is applied AT LEAST 120 days before harvest and applications are documented in the Manure Application Record. All manure is stored in areas away from crop production areas. **(Option A, 1-14 to 1-17)**

- ☐ If using composted manure, outline exact usage, methods of processing, or include Certificates of Analysis (COAs). **(Option B, 1-18 to 1-21)**

What is your policy on manure?

Composted manure is also applied. Records are maintained as to the type of composting (passive or active), composting time, temperature of pile (if active), and microbial testing reports for active treatment.

Compost piles are covered to reduce the chance of runoff, leaching, wind spread, or recontamination. If composted manure or treated bio-solids are purchased, documentation of analysis reports is received for each shipment and kept with the manure records.

(Note: Some buyers and marketing agreements have a requirement far beyond this time frame. If you voluntarily sign up for the marketing agreements, you MUST follow their parameters.)

Composting Practices

The National Organic Program Regulatory Text
USDA-AMS www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/standards/FullRegTextOnly.html
§ 205.203 Soil fertility and crop nutrient management practice standard

(c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by

plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances. Animal and plant materials include:

(1) Raw animal manure, which must be composted unless it is:

(2) Composted plant and animal materials produced through a process that

(i) established an initial C: N ratio of between 25:1 and 40:1; and

(ii) maintained a temperature of between 131° F and 170° F for 3 days using an in vessel or static aerated pile system: or

(iii) maintained a temperature of between 131° F and 170° F for 15 days using a windrow composting system, during which period, the materials must be turned a minimum of five times.

Do you compost? If so, what is your policy on composting?

Farm Location and Land Management

A general description of the farm and adjacent land. It is best to do an adjacent land assessment so you know what is around your farm that may be a risk. Being adjacent to manure lagoons or animal operations, including dairy and feed animal production, may represent risks. If you have significant wild animal issues, you need to be aware and address the management of them such as nuisance permits, fencing, annoying cannons, or other deterrents.

(1-23 to 1-25 **R**)

Google Earth offers aerial views of your land and surrounding properties that can give better insight to potential risks from other locations.

Traceability

What traceability coding do you use for these areas of the operation? Is this information documented? (1-26 **R**)

Field Harvest and Field Packing Activities

Field Sanitation and Hygiene

Is a pre-harvest assessment conducted? By who? What are they looking for? How often is it done? Is this information documented? (2-1 **D**)

Where are field toilet facilities located? What are the procedures for handling a septic or sanitation hazard in the field? (2-2 **O,** 2-3 **O**, 2-4 **O**, & 2-5 **P**)

Harvesting Tools, Containers, and Carts

Where are harvesting tools, containers, and carts stored when not in use? Are they cleaned and sanitized? When were they cleaned and sanitized? What other materials/equipment are included in these procedures harvesting equipment and totes, knives, boxes, transportation equipment, processing equipment (tables, cooling tubs), and storage equipment)? Do you remove excessive dirt when possible? Where is this information recorded? (2-6 to 2-7 **D**) (2-16 **O**)

Harvesting Totes, Containers, Packaging

What types of totes, containers, and packaging are used for harvesting? Where is it stored? Single use packaging? Are they cleaned and sanitized? What chemicals are used? How often? By who? Where is this information recorded? (3-29 **O**) (2-14 **P**) (2-19 **D**, 2-20 **O**, & 3-27 **D**)

Prepared by Chelsea Triche and Fatemeh Malekian, PhD, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center

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Harvesting Tools

How are harvesting tools cleaned and sanitized? What chemicals are used? How often? By who? Where is this information recorded?

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_____
_____
_____
_____

Glass

Are glass containers allowed in the field or packing house? Do you use light bulbs that are shatter proof or shielded with shatter proof sleeves covers? How is broken glass handled? (2-11 **P**)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Vehicles in the Production Fields

It is preferred that you only use designated carts, containers, and vehicles for moving produce to the storage shed. Consideration: all purpose vehicles that not only haul produce but carry other things such as dogs, compost, bags of fish fertilizer, hunted game, etc. Keep it clean for the picking season and going to market.

Gas spills: The contaminated soil can be treated on-site or sent away for treatment. What you do will depend on the amount of contaminant and the soil to be treated.

Transporting produce from the field to storage or processing

Any product that is being moved from the field to the processing and storage house will be covered. Any vehicle or means of moving the harvesting totes to the processing house will be clean and in good repair.

All vehicles will be inspected for the following prior to entering the fields:

- interior and exterior cleanliness
- no broken or cracked plastic or glass windows, fixtures, covers, or other parts
- no dripping oil, anti-freeze, or other fluid, petroleum product, or automotive lubricant
- If you are going to be moving produce with a passenger vehicle, there must be no contamination hazards present including food, pet hair, or other items that could compromise the produce.

There are procedures in place to handle a situation when the field is contaminated with any chemicals or petroleum.

How are products moved to processing or storage facilities? How do you handle a chemical or petroleum spill? Are the vehicles inspected and by who? Is this information recorded? (2-18 **P,** 2-17 **O**, 2-12 **P**)

Traceability

What traceability coding do you use for these areas of the operation? Is this information recorded? (2-21 **D**)

House Packing Facility

Packing and Storage House Sanitation

Packing and Storage Area Maintenance

Do you have a packing house? Who is authorized to access the packing house? What are the products stored? How are the products protected against contamination? What happens to contaminated products? What is your policy on products that hit the floor? Are drains checked?

(3-1 **O** & 3-2 **O**) (3-26 **P**) (3-17 **O**, 3-18 **O**, 3-21 **O**, & 3-22 **O**) (3-25 **O**)

Packing house considerations for packing houses that are **not enclosed:**
*Note: Packing facilities that are NOT closed will automatically lose 5 points on the GHP/GAP audit *(3-20).*

a) Four sticks and a lid: If your packing house is just a roof with support or a tent or a canopy, you will need to consider other risks. For instance, if the roof has rafters, you will need to deter birds from roosting with nets or use some other method. You may not need rodent control for the ground, but may need to make sure you mow or maintain the grounds around the area to deter pest harborage. If flies are an issue, you can use fans to deter them. The important thing is to assess the risks and work to reduce whatever risks exist.

b) Open air: Keeping the area clear and control dust and dry dirt from blowing around if that is an issue. If your open-air packing is under a tree, controlling birds may be an issue.

Washing and Packing Line

Source water used in the packing of fresh fruits and vegetables, either for washing or to disinfect produce or apply waxes, MUST be potable. Copies of the municipal water test results are obtained yearly and kept with the water records. Farm wells should be tested at least twice a year to determine potability. Surface water (ponds, lakes, streams, etc.) is not considered potable for a packinghouse and cannot be used.

If the operation includes a washing process for produce, an initial risk assessment must be performed that takes into consideration:

- Commodity
- Type of wash system
- Type of sanitizer
- Water quality

Is potable water used?_____ (3-3 **R** & 3-11 **R**)

Are washing, grading, sorting, packing lines, and food contact surfaces cleaned and sanitized? How often? Is this documented? (3-6 **D**)

_____

_____

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_____

Sanitizers and Antimicrobial Treatments

Are wash water antimicrobial used? Do you have documentation of regulatory approval? Are the antimicrobials used according to the manufacturer's instructions? Is this documented? (3-5 **D**)

_____

_____

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_____

Temperature

Do you monitor the temperature of the water in dump tanks, flumes, sinks, basins etc.? How often is it monitored? Is it recorded? (3-4 **D**)

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_____

_____

Use a thermometer to test pulp/core temperatures for accurate temperatures when washing

produce in the “dunk tank” fashion. Tomatoes, netted melon, and apples are prone to absorbing water in the stem end or through blemishes when submerged in water that is colder than the pulp temp.

Sorting of products might be an added to visually inspect product for cut, blemishes, or signs of wildlife damage that can make them more susceptible to water infiltration.

Maintaining Wash Water Quality

Multi-sinks or other small communal washing basins are essentially the same as dump tanks. The benefit is that the water is usually changed more often (document this), and you have better control of the material that enters the basin (can pre-rinse with single pass water to remove leaves and field dirt) so you can use less disinfectant if the microbial and organic load is lower. See list of OMRI approved sanitizers.
Follow label directions (include copy with SOP). More frequent water changes will be necessary if your monitoring system is not very good.

Describe how this is done in your plan:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Do you clean and sanitize water-contact surfaces including dump tanks, flumes, and wash basins? How often? Is it documented?

This includes surfaces that can be sanitized; wood cannot be sanitized. Equipment that allows for the collection of debris (visible or invisible) must be redesigned to eliminate the potential risk and allow for proper cleaning. Periodic water sampling and microbial testing could be added to determine the system is functioning properly.

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_____
_____
_____

Ice Management

When chlorine is used to disinfect produce, the concentration of free chlorine is generally between 50-150 parts per with a contact time of one to two minutes. Concentrations may vary by commodity, so double check before you implement this practice.

Ice or cold water (hydro-cooling) is often used to reduce the temperature of a product. Water used for this must be potable to reduce the risk of food contamination. If ice is purchased, a water report should be obtained from the source to ensure the water is potable. If

using farm well water, the well should be tested twice a year for fecal coliform and generic *E. coli*. Ice making facilities must be sanitized on a regular schedule.

What is your ice management policy? What is your water source for the ice? Is the container cleaned and sanitized? What is the frequency? (3-11 **R**)

Food Grade Cleaners and Lubricants

What food grade lubricants do you use and what is your policy on them? (3-15 **R**) **(**3-16 **O**)

Glass

What is your glass policy? (3-24 O)

Policy for produce that hits the floor

What is your policy for produce that hits the floor?

External Grounds

Are the areas outside the packing house well maintained (well-mowed or gravel)? Is the area free of debris that would harbor pests and free of standing water? Are garbage cans/dumpsters covered and located away from packinghouse entrances? (3-19 **O**)

Rodent and Pest Control

Farm operations are inevitably subject to animal and pest infiltration. You must do your best to keep pest problems under control. Special attention will be paid to the processing and storage facility due to the permeability of the structure. If this permeability becomes a pest problem, a plan to deal with the cracks and holes will be developed at that time.

Storage rooms, areas for boxes, coolers, and sheds, where packing is done or another location where produce is kept until picked up, needs to be inspected and kept free from rodents and birds.

If you hire an exterminator/outside pest control company, they should monitor the facilities monthly. All traps will be checked and documented daily by the farm manager. A service report from the exterminating company will be provided or updated monthly. If a change in conditions develops, the monitoring company will be contacted immediately.

What is your pest/rodent policy? How do you monitor and prevent? Do you document and where? Who is in charge? What types of chemicals are used, if any and where? (3-30 **D,** 3-31 **D**, 3-32 **R**, 3-33 **O**, 4-13 **D**,4-14 **D**, 4-15 **R**, &4-16 **O**)

Traceability

What traceability coding do you use for this area of the operation? Is this information documented? (3-34 **D**)

Storage and Transportation

Pallets

Are pallets used? Are they repaired and cleaned as necessary? Where are they stored? (3-28 **O**)

Prepared by Chelsea Triche and Fatemeh Malekian, PhD, Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center

Storage Cooler

Temperature

How often will you check the cooler temperature? Do you record the results? Corrective action? Do you calibrate the thermometers? How often? (4-19 **D** & 4-21 **O**) (4-20 **D**)

Cleaning

How often do you clean the storage cooler? Do you document cleanings? (4-22 **D**)

Vehicles for Produce Transportation to Market

Are vehicles cleaned and inspected? Is this documented? Do you keep invoices and for how long? (4-24 to 4-27 **P**)

(May want to add: Contracted vehicles will provide a cleaning schedule and temperature log for the vehicle prior to loading.)

Special consideration/SOPs should be developed for operations that have only one truck that transports pesticides, farm pets, and fresh produce. Simple SOP that includes cleaning before transporting fresh produce will suffice.

When refrigerated transport is required, a written policy for transporters to maintain a specified temperature during transit is established. In addition, refrigerated transportation must:

- Follow pre-cooling procedures from a documented protocol
- Have properly maintained and serviced refrigeration equipment
- Have a method for recording product temperatures before or upon loading

Bioterrorism & Pesticide Usage Considerations Public Health, Security, and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002

_____ is aware of the Act and understands how his operation is affected. _____ Farms qualifies as a food production facility and has been registered under the Act. Employees will notify _____ immediately if they observe suspicious persons, vehicles, or packages around the farm.

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