



Farm Produce Safety Initiative – How to Register and Why Registration is Important

What is FSMA?

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) was signed into law by President Obama on January 4, 2011. It aims to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to contamination to preventing it.

FSMA Proposed Standards for Produce Safety

The proposed produce rule covers all fruits and vegetables except those rarely consumed raw, produced for personal consumption, or destined for commercial processing that will reduce microorganisms of public health concern. The proposed rule is based on science and risk-analysis, and therefore focuses on areas of risk.

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Food Protection Program has launched a new initiative to address the safety of whole, uncut produce sold in the wholesale food distribution chain. The goal of this initiative is to encourage produce farmers to adopt Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and good handling practices to prevent contamination of produce from farm to distribution.

The Produce Safety Initiative is still developing as the Standards for Produce Safety are being established under the Food Safety Modernization Act. These federal standards will affect many produce operations that grow, harvest, pack, or store produce. ISDH Food Safety Farm Consultants are available to help growers comply with FSMA standards and to manage risks from the farm to the packing shed.

Who has to register and why is registration important?

1. Registration is required by the Indiana Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act IC 16-42-1-6: "A manufacturer, processor, repackager, or wholesale distributor of food, drugs, or cosmetics who maintains a place of business in Indiana shall file with the state department, upon forms to be furnished by the state department, a written statement of the name and address of the owner, the character of the business, and the business address of each place of business in Indiana."

Indiana's Wholesale Food Establishment Sanitation Requirements consider you a wholesale food establishment if your farming operation processes, packages, stores, repackages, or transports fruits or vegetables for distribution to another entity for resale or redistribution.
2. Maintaining registrations of produce growers will enable ISDH to quickly identify and contact farms that may be involved in outbreaks, food defense threats, or other public health emergencies. Registration information will also allow investigators to rule out farms potentially implicated in the outbreak, preventing greater loss of product and consumer confidence.
3. Wholesale produce farms must be registered to be considered as an "approved source" for retail food establishments purchasing their produce.



Indiana State Department of Health

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Who are the Food Safety Farm Consultants?

Jennifer Coleman is assigned to Northern Indiana. She can be reached at 317-476-0059 or jencoleman@isdh.in.gov

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For more information regarding FSMA Produce Safety Standards, visit <http://www.fda.gov>

How do I register my farm?

Registration can be fulfilled by completing the Registration Application for Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Growers and Distributors. The form can be found on the ISDH Farm Produce Safety Initiative Website:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/25773.htm>

Registration is free, and re-registration is only required when changes to ownership, character of business, or location of business take place.

I have never had to register before. Why now?

According to the CDC, illness outbreaks associated with produce have doubled between 1998 and 2004, and 46% of outbreak-associated illnesses from 1998 to 2008 were attributed to fruit, nut, and vegetable commodities alone. In 2012, Indiana experienced an outbreak of Salmonellosis attributed to fresh cantaloupe, resulting in 261 illnesses and 3 deaths. As outbreaks associated with fresh produce continue to occur every year, ISDH recognizes a need to ensure that Indiana growers are supplying safe, wholesome produce to consumers. The Produce Safety Initiative intends to close food safety gaps in the produce supply chain, and encourage safe practices from farm to distribution. This initiative will promote the implementation of preventative measures during the growing, harvesting, packing, storing, and transportation of fresh produce to reduce the likelihood contamination on the farm. Requiring registration and GAPs training for growers is an important step in helping to prevent illness outbreaks, protect consumer health, and maintain consumer confidence in Indiana-grown produce!

- ❖ **Indiana has two Food Safety Farm Consultants to work with produce farmers. By registering, you have access to this valuable assistance.**
- ❖ **They are available with a variety of resources to assist with food safety and can conduct food defense vulnerability assessments.**
- ❖ **They also conduct environmental assessments and collect produce surveillance samples for testing**
- ❖ **These specialists are also available for outreach, as well as education, to individual produce farmers as well as professional trade organizations**