



RI DEM Division of Agriculture/Produce Safety Program

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Produce Safety Program Announcement

Produce Safety On-Farm Readiness Reviews to assist growers:

This week, the RI Division of Agriculture joins 46 other states in beginning their On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR) to help producers prepare for the Produce Safety Rule (PSR) portion of the Federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). FSMA was signed into law in 2011, and went into effect January 26, 2018. A one-year grace period was granted by FDA for compliance inspections; with inspections on large farms starting Spring 2019 and smaller farms in subsequent years.

Before RI begins their compliance inspections, we are offering producers several opportunities to ensure they are prepared. The OFRRs are a component of a concerted educational and awareness effort by the Division of Agriculture that builds upon the principles of the long standing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Program in RI.

Is your farm exempt? This is a no-cost opportunity to determine if your farm qualifies for an exemption. The Division of Agriculture's Produce Safety Team will arrange a visit to your farm where they can review the FSMA regulations and make suggestions for your specific operation. OFRR visits must be made during the growing season. Upon request, the Produce Safety Team will schedule a face-to-face meeting to go over PSR requirements prior to a walk-around. These can be scheduled year-round. No records will be kept of these non-regulatory, voluntary visits. Any recommendations and/or notes taken will be left on-site to offer guidance in potential PSR improvements to the operation.

Regional update:

- RI and NH have just joined all other New England States in having the Produce Safety Rule program within respective Departments of Agriculture.
- Connecticut and Massachusetts have already adopted the Federal Produce Safety Rule into State regulation:
 - MA expanded the basic rule to cover farms of all income levels. Applying this uniform standard allows all MA farms an equal opportunity for market access; this was based on buyer demand.
 - CT chose to offer inspections to all farms, regardless of PSR coverage. This allows those farms who don't fall under PSR to request an inspection, again enhancing market access opportunity.
- RI plans to adopt an approach similar to CT, to ensure equal market opportunities to all RI farms.

To find out more about PSR, FSMA, or to schedule a meeting or On-Farm Readiness Review, please visit:

- www.dem.ri.gov/producesafety
- Or contact Ananda Fraser by email: Ananda.fraser@dem.ri.gov or phone: (401) 222-2781 x2411