
Webinar: Your “Get Ready” Checklist for Produce Safety

December 05, 2017 | Dr. Hilary Thesmar, SVP, Food Safety Programs at FMI

Questions/Answers

Q: If they are not required to register with the FDA, but somehow are still held to the produce safety rule, what is required of them by USDA- if anything?

A: FSMA and the Produce Safety rule are regulatory requirements of the FDA. USDA Agriculture Marketing Service has several voluntary programs in place for produce growers but these are separate programs.

Q: If the soils parameters, listeria probably is going to be positive... we have to do another analysis for knowing if it is or not pathogenic??

A: The requirements for soil amendments are in Section F (§112.51 – 112.60) which include requirements of soil amendments, treatment, handling, storage, prohibitions, and microbial standards. The soil amendments are required to be treated by a chemical, biological or physical process and there are microbial standards that must be met.

Q: Ag water - will the regulations. be zero E. coli for all ag irrig.? Or, just over head such as center pivot sprinklers. Would drip irrigation be handles differently by the risk assessment? What is the status of the "log 5 reduction" in these situations?

A: Subpart E addresses agricultural water and explains all of the requirements. September, 13, 2017 Proposed Rule extending the compliance date - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-09-13/pdf/2017-19434.pdf>

Q: We collect, pack and distribute raw & unfiltered honey. Are we exempt?

A: See this factsheet

<https://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/UCM365377.pdf>

Q: Where is the Produce Safety Plan description in the Regulations?

A: Produce safety plans are covered in the training from the Produce Safety Alliance but are not required in the final rule from the FDA. Written Produce Safety Plans do not appear in the regulation but are discussed in the preamble to the rule on page 74379 of the Federal Register Notice.

Q: Are green chickpeas exempt?

A: Chickpeas are on the list of foods that are rarely consumed raw –

(a) The following produce is not covered by this part:

(1) Produce that is rarely consumed raw, specifically the produce on the

following exhaustive list: Asparagus; beans, black; beans, great Northern; beans, kidney; beans, lima; beans, navy; beans, pinto; beets, garden (roots and tops); beets, sugar; cashews; cherries, sour; chickpeas; cocoa beans; coffee beans; collards; corn, sweet; cranberries; dates; dill (seeds and weed); eggplants; figs; ginger; hazelnuts; horseradish; lentils; okra; peanuts; pecans; peppermint; potatoes; pumpkins; squash, winter; sweet potatoes; and water chestnuts.

Q: We a packing facility... We buy from Farmers and repack product... Do all these regulations still apply to us in the same way?

A: Facilities that “manufacture, process, pack or hold food” in general fall under the requirements to register with the FDA and comply with the Preventive Controls for Human Food rule or Preventive Controls for Animal Food rule.

Here is a link to the webpage regarding facility registration which contains guidance documents and additional information -

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FoodFacilityRegistration/default.htm>

Q: Is a plant which does washing and slicing the produce besides packing considered a secondary farm?

A: This depends on the type of facility and the activities performed. It could be a farm or could be a processing facility. It would be best to review the guidance documents from the FDA on facility registration to determine to most appropriate categorization and therefore regulatory requirements.

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FoodFacilityRegistration/default.htm>

Q: What are importer requirements to be compliant w FSMA?

A: Take a look at the FDA webpage on FSVP requirements

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm361902.htm>

ReposiTrak has several webinar in the archives on FSVP

<https://repositrak.com/category/blog/webinar-blog/>

Q: Are we required to write comments of a review in addition to a simple check that an element was reviewed?

A: Records requirements for the Produce Safety rule are specified in Subpart O. The information depends on the requirement in the regulation and sometimes is a piece of data and sometimes is supporting evidence for required elements.

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