



On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR): The Next Step in Preparing for FSMA's Produce Safety Rule

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Introduction

In Virginia, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) is enforcing the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule. The FSMA Produce Safety Rule is a regulatory rule by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that sets the science-based minimum standards for the safe growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fruits and vegetables (FDA, 2015). Compliance and inspection dates listed below.

Business Size	FSMA PSR Compliance Date	VDACS Inspection Date
Other businesses (>\$500k)	01/26/18	05/19
Small businesses (>\$250K-500K)	01/28/19	05/20
Very small businesses (>\$25K-250K)	01/27/20	05/21

VCE has several fact sheets on the FSMA Produce Safety Rule (see resources below), for example: "Is my Operation Covered or Exempt from the FSMA Produce Safety Rule Survey" (https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_emnHR0UpFpiVv1r).

To help prepare for the regulation, operations can choose to have an On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR). VDACS has partnered with Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) to perform OFRRs in Virginia.

What is an On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR)?

The OFRR is a program designed specifically to help produce operations align their food safety practices with the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, and be prepared for an inspection by VDACS. The OFRR team is made up of one member each from VDACS and VCE. The program lasts no longer than 2 hours, is 100% confidential, and completely free.

Ideally the OFRR will happen when the produce operation is in production, but the OFRR team will work to find a time that works best for the operation's schedule.



Photo Credit: Pam Wiley, Virginia Farm Bureau.

VDACS Inspector, Alex Goodman, showing Dana Boyle of Garner's Produce how to use the free OFRR manual.

Important to Know Before Scheduling an OFRR

The operation needs to have had one employee go through the PSA Grower Training course, or an equivalent course (required in the law).

To find an upcoming course in Virginia; check the Produce Safety Alliance webpage: <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/trainin/grower-training-courses/upcoming-grower-trainings/> and search “VA,” to sign up.

Scheduling an OFRR in Virginia?

1. Call the VDACS Produce Safety Team at 804-786-4003 or use the VDACS website: www.Vaproducesafety.com

If you don't feel comfortable, reach out to VDACS through your local Virginia Cooperative Extension agent/specialist; as VCE can help you through the process.

2. VDACS will have a conversation with you about aspects of your operation to determine the most relevant portions of the FSMA Produce Safety Rule (as portions may not apply to your operation).
3. A date and time that works best for the operation will be scheduled. **Remember the OFRR is no more than 2 hours of your day, free, and completely confidential.**

What Happens at the OFRR?

1. The OFRR team will arrive on the farm promptly at the schedule date/time.
2. The grower will describe their operation, and answer questions related to their FSMA Produce Safety Rule preparedness. This is NOT a review of your records; only a conversation.

3. At the end of the review, the OFRR team will:

- Leave **ALL** notes associated with the review at the operation (confidential).
- Give the operation an educational OFRR manual (**free perk**).
- Provide up to three things the operation should work on before the first regulatory inspection.

Resources and References:

- Food and Drug Administration (FDA). 2015. Food Safety Modernization Act Produce Safety Rule. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2015-11-27/pdf/2015-28159.pdf>
- Produce Safety Alliance (PSA). 2019. Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training. Module 5, version 1.2. <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/curriculum/>
- Virginia Produce Food Safety Website. 2017. <http://www.hort.vt.edu/producesafety/>
- Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: Produce Safety Website: www.VAproducesafety.com
- Is my Operation Covered or Exempt from the FSMA Produce Safety Rule Survey? Virginia Cooperative Extension. Available at: https://vce.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/S_V_emnhR0UpFpiVv1r