

# Policies and procedures applicable toward meeting GAP standards

The following are examples of how you might document your farm food safety policies and procedures. These are only suggestions and may not be complete.

Evaluate your own practices and make sure you are taking steps to control any potential food safety hazards you have identified on your farm. You may use this text to help you to write your policies and practices in your food safety plan.

## Water Quality

**Policy:** Water used for drinking, that contacts harvested produce, or that contacts containers used to hold harvested produce meets the potable water quality standards prescribed by the US Environmental Protection Agency. If water used for hand washing does not meet EPA potability standards, it has been made safe by addition of chlorine or other acceptable agents.

Potable water is used for chemical or irrigation applications that come in direct contact with the edible portion of the crop.

### Testing requirements:

- **Municipal water:** Test results are acquired from the local water authority annually.
- **Well water:** Water is tested two (2) times during the growing season. If fecal coliforms are present, the well is treated with a sanitizer to reduce levels. Wells are monitored to make sure casings are secure and well-maintained and that livestock and manure storage areas are excluded from the well recharge and pumping area.
- **Surface water:** Water is tested three (3) times during the growing season – first at planting, second at peak use, third at or near harvest.

## Manure and Municipal Biosolids

**Policy:** Whenever raw manure is used, it is applied to soil at least 120 days before harvest. Whenever treated or composted manures or biosolids are used, they are treated, composted, or aged adequately to reduce pathogens to safe levels.

Analysis reports document that the composted manure or treated biosolids are safe to use.

## Worker Health, Hygiene, and Sanitary Practices

**Policy:** Employees who handle harvested produce are required to follow proper sanitation and hygiene practices including washing their hands at the following times:

1. Before beginning or returning to work
2. After using the toilet
3. After eating and smoking
4. After handling contaminated materials

Workers are instructed to understand where the toilet facilities are located and how to use them so they do not contribute to product contamination. Workers are encouraged to use the toilet facilities and are given reasonable access to them throughout the harvesting period.

Workers are instructed to drink or eat food only in designated areas that are sufficiently far enough away from growing areas to prevent contamination (see map for location). Potable water is continuously made available in these areas by water fountains or other sanitary means. Alternatively, where necessary, bulk sanitary water dispensers and single serving cups are continuously made available to workers.

Workers are instructed that they may carry bottled water in unbreakable, capped containers into growing areas if they are careful not to spill water onto the harvested produce.

Workers with a diarrheal disease or symptoms of other infectious disease are instructed to report this to their supervisor and are assigned to non-produce handling areas.

Health and hygiene policies also apply to anyone else who enters crop production areas (e.g. owners, supervisors, visitors, inspectors, etc.).

## Toilet and Hand Washing Facilities

**Policy:** Sanitary facilities are provided to reduce the potential for produce contamination and ensure that employees and consumers are protected from foodborne diseases.

### **(1) Hand washing facilities:**

- A basin, container, or outlet with an adequate supply of potable water, soap, and single-use towels are provided for each toilet facility. Each station has a sign, written in a language(s) that all employees can understand that reminds them when and how to wash their hands.

### **(2) Toilet and hand washing facilities.**

- At least one (1) toilet facility and one (1) hand washing station is continuously made available for every twenty (20) employees. Toilet and hand washing facilities are accessible and located in close proximity to each other and within a one-quarter-mile

walk of each hand laborer's place of work in the field. Where due to terrain or it is not feasible to locate facilities as required above, the facilities are located at the point closest to vehicular access and workers are provided reasonable access throughout the day.

- Toilet facilities are adequately ventilated, appropriately screened, have self-closing doors that can be closed and latched from the inside and are constructed to insure privacy.
- Where employees who perform field work for a period of three (3) hours or less (including transportation time to and from the field) during the day, toilet and hand washing facilities are available at alternative sites.

**(3) Maintenance:** The following maintenance procedures are followed:

- Toilet and hand washing facilities are regularly maintained and supplied as necessary to keep them clean, sanitary, and functional.
- Water for drinking and hand washing is continuously supplied.
- Wastes are regularly disposed of so that unsanitary conditions do not occur.
- If a major spill or leak of field sanitation units or toilet facilities occurs, access to the facility and the affected area around it is blocked off until clean up occurs. The facility cannot be used by workers until a supervisor has inspected the site for cleanliness.

**(4) Reasonable use:** Employees are notified of the location of the sanitary facilities and water and are allowed reasonable opportunities to use them.

## Adjacent and Previous Land Use

**Policy:** Potential hazards due to previous land use and/or adjacent property activities including regular or recent flooding, manure handling and storage areas, cattle/dairy operations, or surface water sources have been identified. When adjacent or previous land use history indicates a possibility of contamination, preventative measures have been taken to minimize the known risks.

### Previous land use:

- If the land was used as a dairy or feedlot within the last three (3) years or as a waste site at any time in the past, soil tests have been conducted to assure that crops will not become contaminated.
- Land where annual crops are grown and that have recently been subjected to flooding must be tested for potential microbial hazards.

### Adjacent land use:

- Crop production areas are sufficiently separated from dairy, livestock, or fowl production facilities, manure lagoons, or other sources of contamination to minimize opportunities for wind and/or water contamination from occurring.
- Entry of domestic animals into growing areas is forbidden.
- Crop production areas are monitored for the presence or signs of wild or domestic animals entering the land. If there are signs that deer, or other large wild animals have entered growing areas, all reasonable measures are taken prevent reentry.

# Harvesting, Field Packing, and Transportation

**Policy:** Measures are taken to prevent microbial and chemical contamination of crops during harvesting, handling, and field packing operations.

## 1) Harvesting and Field Packing

- All harvesting containers that come in direct contact with product are cleaned and/or sanitized prior to use and kept as clean as practical.
- Harvesting containers, totes, etc. are not be used for carrying or storing non-produce items during the harvest season.

## 2) Transportation:

- Transportation equipment that comes into contact with harvested produce must be clean and in good repair.
- Vehicles used to transport containers of harvested crops are kept clean.
- As harvested product is moved from field to storage areas or to packing or processing areas, it is protected from sources of contamination.

## 3) Product contamination policies

**Hazardous chemicals.** Workers are instructed to throw away any product that has become contaminated by toxic chemicals such as fuel, pesticides, or other harmful substances during harvesting operations and to report the incident to their supervisor. Supervisors are to determine the cause of the incident and to correct procedures and conditions if necessary.

**Glass, metal, hard plastic policy.** Exposed glass on equipment and machinery is protected against breakage. Workers are instructed to throw away any product that has become contaminated by glass, metal fragments, and hard plastics or other harmful foreign objects not normally found in fresh produce and to report any incidents to their supervisor. Supervisors are to determine the cause of the incident and to correct procedures and conditions if necessary.

**Bodily fluids.** Workers are instructed to dispose of any product that has been contaminated with bodily fluids (blood, saliva, sweat, mucus) and to report this promptly to their supervisor. Workers are instructed to sneeze or cough away from the product or into the inside of their shirt to prevent product contamination. If hands are used to cover a cough or sneeze, they are to be properly washed before continuing work. If a food contact surface (e.g. utensils, containers, tables, conveyers) has become contaminated with bodily fluids, supervisors are required to make sure it is cleaned and sanitized before it is used again.

## Training

**Policy:** Training on proper sanitation and hygiene practices is provided to all harvesters and handlers at least once each season before harvesting begins. If a worker does not follow

acceptable sanitary practices, he/she is verbally corrected and retrained if needed. Repeated lapses in good sanitary and hygienic practices are grounds for dismissal.

**1) All workers who handle harvested product are trained in the following knowledge areas**

- When and how to correctly wash hands
- Requirement to wear reasonably clean clothes that protect the product from bodily sources of contamination
- Prohibition from handling produce if symptoms of an infectious disease exist
- Knowledge and proper use of pre-harvest and/or post harvest application materials
- Prohibition of use of harvest containers for carrying or storing non-produce items during the harvest season
- Requirement to seek prompt treatment with clean first aid supplies for cuts, abrasions and other injuries
- Requirement to dispose of produce that has come into contact with blood or other body fluids and to report this to a supervisor
- Requirement to report product contamination by chemicals, petroleum, pesticides, glass, a major spill or leak of field sanitation units or toilet facilities, or other contaminating factors

**2) Training records are kept on file for the duration of the growing season and include:**

- When training occurred
- Who attended each training session
- What topics were covered

## **Traceability and Mock Recall**

**Policy:** We are able to trace back our shipments to the field grown and the date of harvest. Buyers have information that will help them trace our products back to the farm.

We provide the following information with each delivery:

- Our farm name
- The name of the crop
- The date harvested
- Contact information for our farm

If a product is comingled during or after harvest, all growers, production areas, and dates regarding the comingled product are provided to the buyer.

We keep records of each sale that includes the harvest location, date of sale, the name of the buyer, and how we can contact them in the event we determine the lot was likely to have become contaminated. Each year, we conduct a mock recall. The goal of the mock recall is to demonstrate that we have open communication pathways with our buyers and that, should it be necessary, we can work with them to remove any of our shipped product from their inventory.

NOTE: Work with your buyer to establish specific procedures.