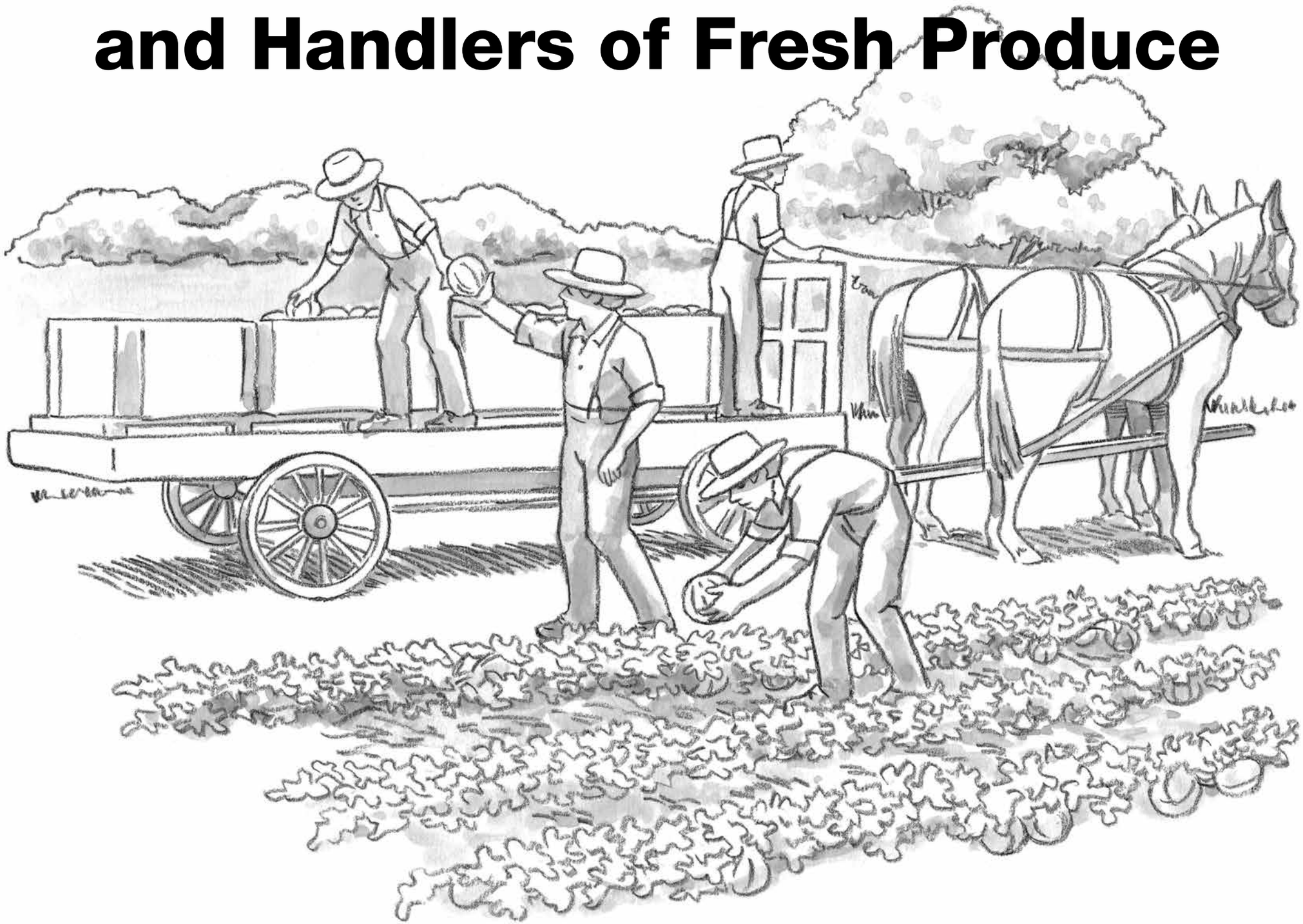
PennState Extension

Farm Food Safety Training for Harvesters and Handlers of Fresh Produce



Why should we care about food safety?

- The food we grow here is fresh, nutritious, and tastes good! We also want it to be safe to eat—that means free from germs or chemicals that could make someone sick, or objects that could injure someone. If someone got sick after eating our fresh produce, no one would want to buy it anymore. Or worse, we could get sued and no longer be able to support our farms and families.

- Unfortunately, some people have gotten sick from eating contaminated fruits and vegetables. Now government agencies, and companies that buy our produce, want us show that we are doing all we can to prevent contamination. More than ever, it's important that we all understand how produce can become contaminated and that we follow a few simple rules to prevent that from happening.

Why should we care about food safety?

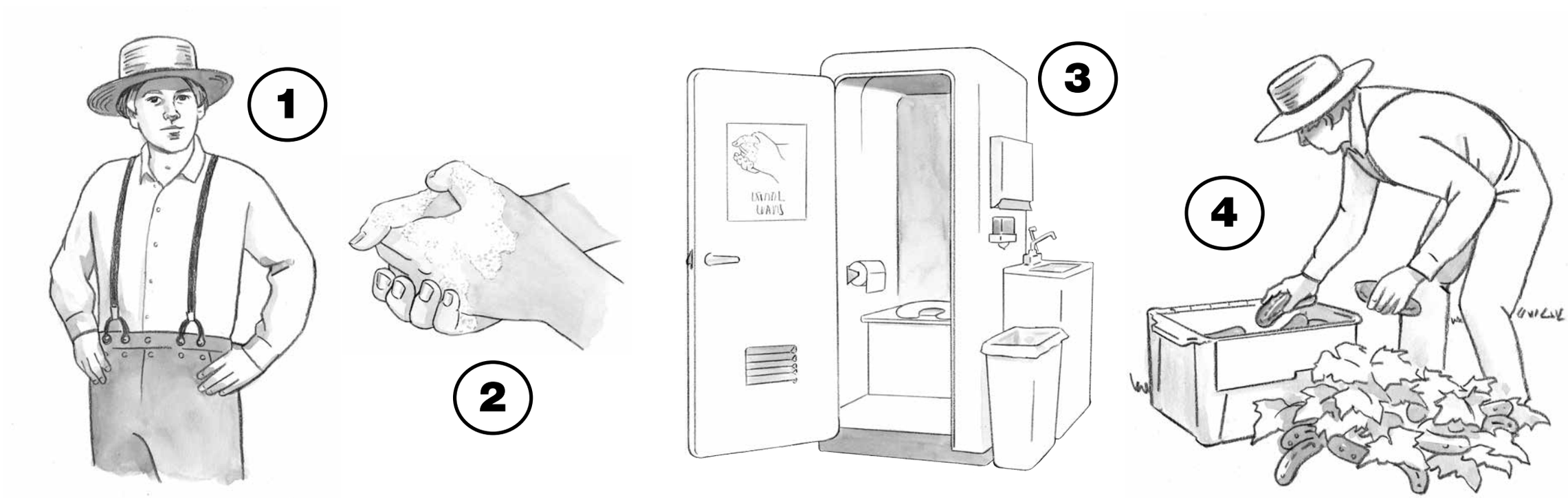
Following the Rules

Here are the rules we all need to follow:

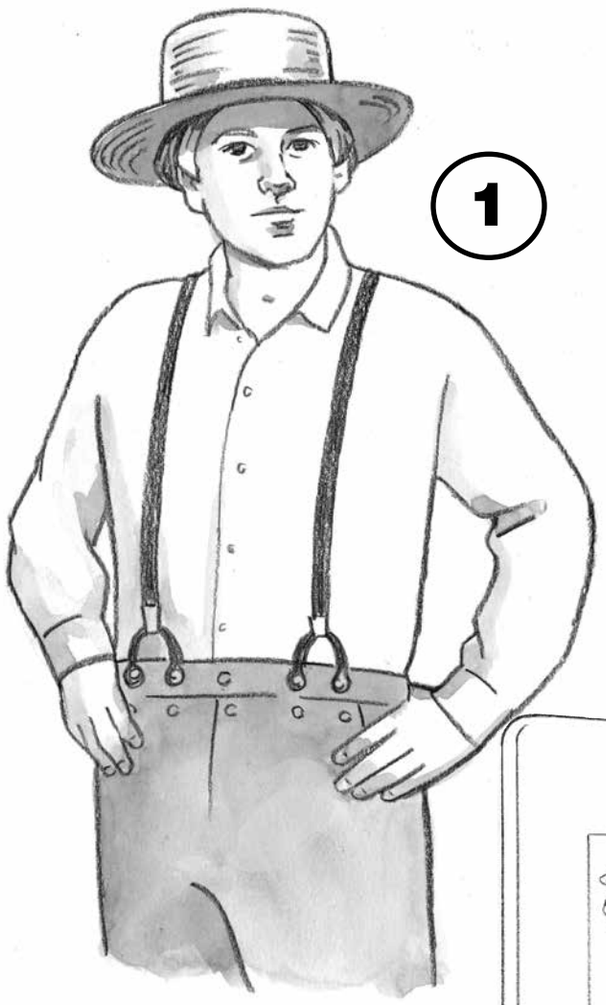
1. Keep clean and healthy.
2. Know when and how to wash your hands.
3. Use the toilet facilities and break areas correctly.
4. Prevent contamination of produce and food-contact surfaces in the field.

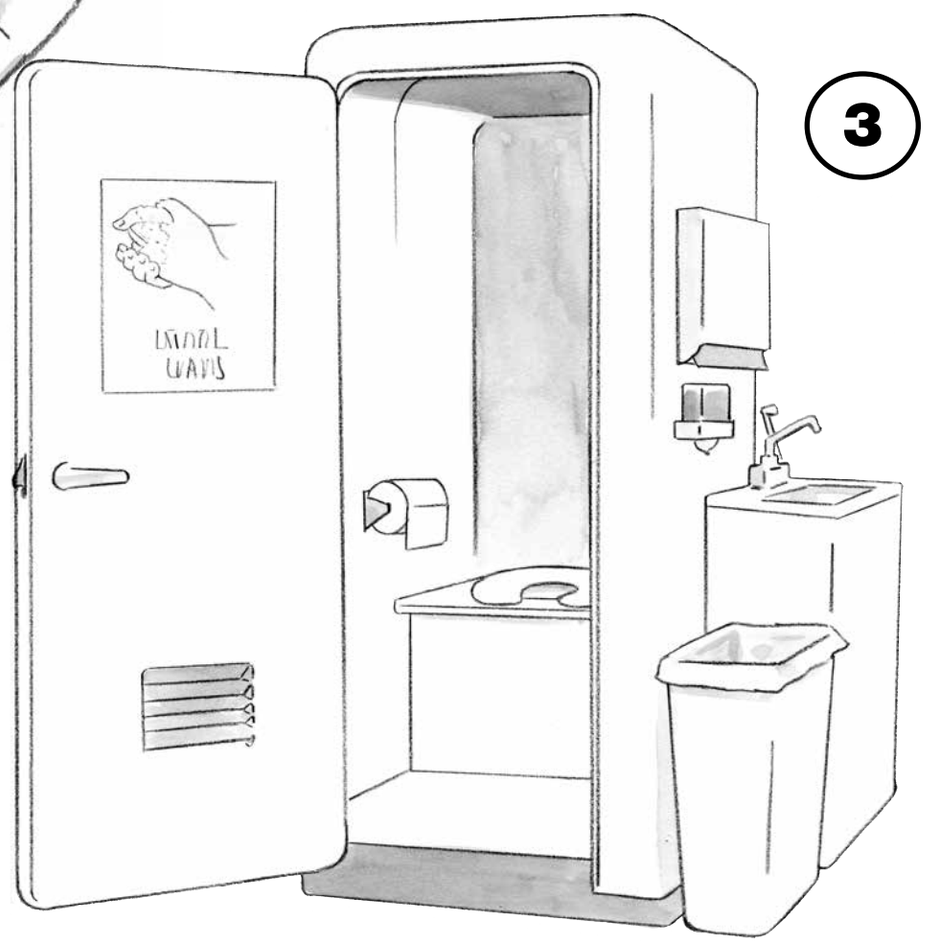
Visitors to the farm must also follow the rules. Make sure signs are posted so that everyone understands them.

We'll go over each these in more detail now.



Following the Rules





Wear clean work clothes.

We will start by talking about how important it is to keep clean and healthy.

- Your clothes help keep sweat, hair, and skin medicines off the product. Wear clean work clothes so dirt and germs cannot contaminate the product.
- A hat not only protects you from the sun but also prevents hair from getting on the product.
- Avoid walking through animal barns and barnyard areas on your way to the field. If your shoes or clothes get soiled, change them before entering produce fields.

Wear clean work clothes.

Don’t harvest or handle produce if you feel sick.

- If you have a fever, are vomiting, have diarrhea, or your skin or eyes have suddenly turned yellow, you may have an illness that can spread through food. This means you could contaminate our produce and make someone who eats it sick.
- If you have any of these symptoms, report this to your supervisor.

Don’t harvest or handle produce if you feel sick.

Wounds and sores can be a source of germs.

- Exposed wounds and sores on your skin, no matter how small, can contaminate fruits and vegetables.
- If you have any cuts or scrapes, get a bandage from your supervisor.
- If you see any blood on the product, throw it away!