



## Contact the Vermont Produce Program

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# Produce Safety & FSMA in Vermont



An overview of the Vermont Produce Program and the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule



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# What Is FSMA?

The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is the most comprehensive reform of our federal food safety laws in over 70 years. The intent of the law is to ensure the U.S. food supply is safe by shifting the focus from responding to foodborne illness to preventing it.

## FDA's FSMA Produce Safety Rule

The Produce Safety Rule (PSR) is one of 7 final FSMA rules. The rule took effect on January 26, 2016 and sets national standards for farms that grow, harvest, pack, or hold produce.

### What Should Produce Growers Do Now?

**Sign up** on the Vermont Produce Portal.

**Determine** whether your farm is subject to the Produce Safety Rule.

**Understand** your farm's requirements under the Produce Safety Rule.

**Attend** a Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training.

**Request** an On-Farm Readiness Review.

**The Produce Safety Rule includes tiered compliance dates based on annual produce sales as well as several types of exemptions.**

Farm Business Size <i>(based on average annual produce sales)</i>	Compliance Date
All other businesses (> \$500K)	January 26, 2018
Small businesses (> \$250-500K)	January 28, 2019
Very small businesses (> \$25-\$250K)	January 27, 2020

# Who Needs to Comply with the Produce Safety Rule?

Farms with greater than \$25,000 in annual produce sales are subject to the rule. If a qualified exemption applies, the farm may only need to meet minimum requirements, including keeping supporting documentation to show that they meet the exemption.

## Less Than \$25,000 in Annual Produce Sales Not Covered

- Keep supporting documentation of annual produce sales.
- FDA recommends that farms that are not covered follow good agricultural practices to ensure the safety of their produce.

## Greater Than \$25,000 in Annual Produce Sales

**Qualified Exempt if** the farm has annual food sales of less than \$500,000 *and* greater than 50% of the farm's food sales are to qualified end-users, defined as (a) the consumer of the food or (b) a restaurant or retail food establishment located in the same state or within 275 miles

### Qualified Exempt farms should—

- Keep supporting documentation of annual produce sales and qualified end users.
- Prepare for labeling requirements in 2020.

**Covered if** the farm does not meet the requirements for the qualified exemption

### Covered farms should—

- Attend a Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training.
- Sign up for an On-Farm Readiness Review.
- Prepare for PSR compliance in 2018, 2019, or 2020.

**Learn about additional exemptions:**  
[www.agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram](http://www.agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram)

# How Will the FSMA Produce Safety Rule Affect Vermont Growers?

The Produce Safety Rule (PSR) will impact Vermont farms that grow, harvest, pack, or hold fruits and vegetables.

## Produce Safety Rule Requirements Cover growing, harvesting, packing and holding activities related to—

- Agricultural Water (Production and Postharvest)
- Biological Soil Amendments (Manure and Compost)
- Sprouts
- Domesticated and Wild Animals
- Worker Training and Health and Hygiene
- Equipment, Tools and Buildings

While many growers meet similar requirements through voluntary programs such as USDA Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and the Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association Community Accreditation for Produce Safety (CAPS) program, **the Produce Safety Rule is a law and must be followed by all farms subject to its provisions.**



# Vermont Produce Portal

All Vermont farms that grow, harvest, pack, or hold produce are encouraged to enroll in the Vermont Produce Portal to:

**Receive** regular policy and news updates on produce safety requirements and resources from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

**Request** an On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR), a voluntary, non-regulatory assessment of a farm's produce safety readiness prior to inspection.

**Gain** eligibility for a **Vermont Produce Safety Improvement Grant** to help pay for on-farm improvements to reduce produce safety risks.

**Understand** if your farm is subject to the Produce Safety Rule with the assistance of a Produce Program staff member.

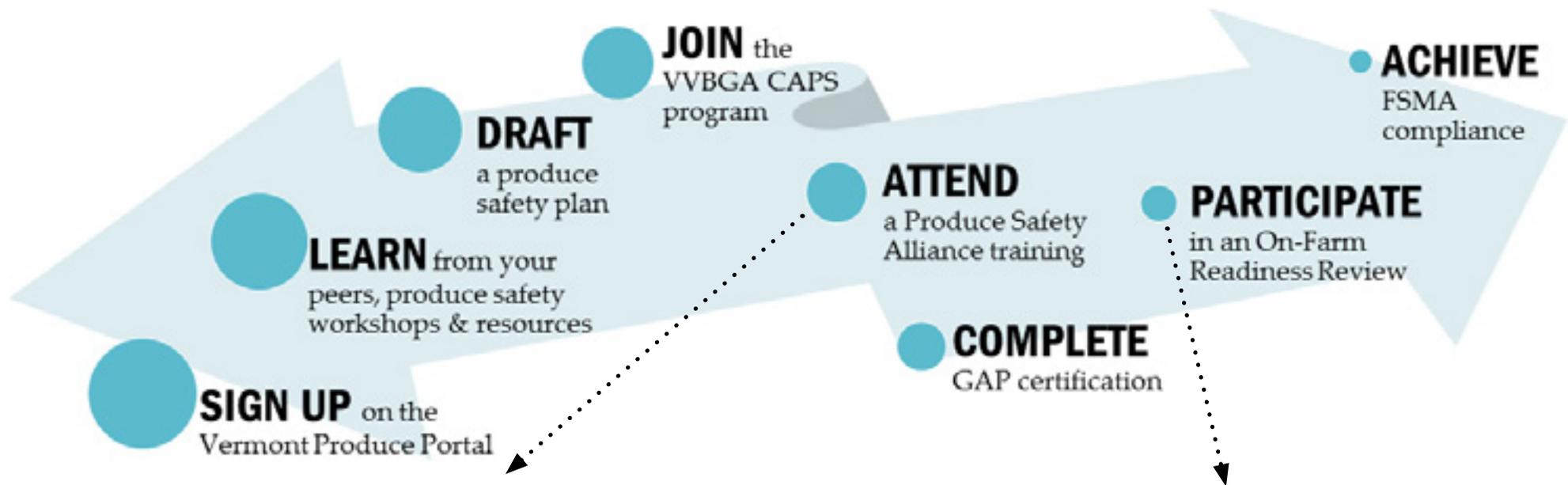
### Enroll today:

[www.agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram](http://www.agriculture.vermont.gov/produceprogram)



# The Vermont Produce Safety Continuum

The Produce Safety Continuum is a visual representation of the different ways a grower may engage in on-farm produce safety. **Not all points will be relevant to all farms, and there is no correct order to participate.** Larger circles indicate that more farms will find an area relevant.



## PSA Grower Training

The PSA Grower Training provides fundamental, science-based, on-farm food safety knowledge to fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, packers, educators, regulatory personnel, and others interested in the safety of fresh produce.

The Produce Safety Rule requires that **at least one responsible party from each covered farm receive training** under an FDA recognized curriculum. The Produce Safety Alliance (PSA) Grower Training course satisfies this requirement.

**To find the next training near you, visit:**

**<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu>**

## On-Farm Readiness Reviews

An On-Farm Readiness Review (OFRR) is a voluntary, non-regulatory opportunity for a grower to have a one-on-one conversation with a Produce Safety Rule expert to evaluate pre-harvest, harvest, and post-harvest processes, assess what growers are doing well, and identify areas for improvement in food safety practices. The reviews are conversational; for example, a reviewer might ask a grower, “Tell me about how you train your employees.” Open-ended questions help the reviewer get a sense of how a farm works and identify potential areas for follow up technical assistance.

OFRRs will be conducted by the Produce Program Team at VAAF and UVM Extension prior to inspections. **Growers interested in scheduling an OFRR should check the box when enrolling in the Produce Portal.**