Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training Overview

This section outlines how to make sure workers know about food safety risks, understand how they can reduce risks while they are working, and have the resources required to properly do their jobs. Because workers are present in the fruit and vegetable growing and packing environments, their health and hygiene practices and other actions directly affect the safety of produce. An effective worker health, hygiene, and training program can only happen with grower commitment and oversight.

Implement training programs to effectively reduce risks

- Use a language workers understand.
- Describe how and when to properly wash hands while working on the farm.
- Discuss the importance of being clean and wearing clean clothes to work.
- Explain why workers should not be working when ill.
- Teach workers how to handle injuries and illnesses on the farm.
- Describe which farm food safety practices and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) workers are responsible for completing and why these practices are important.

Provide facilities and equipment so workers can follow your food safety plan

- Provide clean, private, and well stocked toilets and hand washing facilities.
- Provide all equipment necessary for implementing food safety practices such as access to cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Develop detailed SOPs to ensure proper implementation of practices.
- Make sure all workers know where all equipment and supplies are located and when they are to be used.

Encourage communication so workers will help you identify and reduce risks

- Set a good example.
- Develop a system for communication that is shared during trainings.
- Acknowledge proper behaviors and discourage improper behaviors.

Implement training programs to effectively reduce risks

Workers are the foundation of all food safety programs because they are responsible for implementing the food safety practices. Training should be in the language workers understand to create the best opportunity for learning. Include farm specific food safety practices and SOPs in worker education programs to encourage workers to actively participate in the farm food safety program. Information should be reinforced continuously through the use of posters, refresher trainings, and by management setting a good example. Good training will help workers recognize a risk when they see it and encourage them to do something about it.

The importance of the cleanliness of every worker’s hands throughout all phases of production cannot be over-emphasized because they may be directly touching the produce. All workers, even family members, should receive instruction in proper hygiene practices as well as other food safety practices that you are using on your farm. Hand washing should occur after using the restroom, before starting or returning to work, and before and after eating or smoking to reduce the risk of contamination. Hands must be washed before handling produce. People who are ill or who have symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea can contaminate fruits and vegetables and should not handle produce. Open or infected wounds, blisters, or bleeding cuts also can transmit harmful pathogens to produce. Workers should be taught how to wash and bandage cuts as well as how to check the area around them to be sure
no blood has contaminated fresh produce or food contact surfaces. All contaminated produce should be discarded and contaminated food contact surfaces cleaned and sanitized. With proper bandaging, (e.g. a bandage with a secondary covering such as a glove), workers may return to work or be assigned to tasks that do not include handling fresh produce.

**Provide facilities and equipment so workers can properly follow your food safety plan**

Providing clean, accessible, and well-stocked restroom facilities including toilets and hand washing stations is critical to workers’ hygiene practices. To encourage the use of the facilities, cleaning and maintenance should be regularly scheduled and recorded in a log. Workers need to be provided with the proper tools to do their job well. If your food safety plan has SOPs make sure workers have access to all equipment, tools, supplies, and PPE listed in the SOPs.

**Encourage communication so workers will help you identify and reduce risks**

Good communication encourages workers to report risks including injuries and illnesses. Stress the importance of communication during trainings. There must be a system developed so workers know how to communicate their concerns with their supervisor. When workers find food safety risks, they should report the risks and learn how to reduce the risks they have identified. Proper behaviors and actions should be acknowledged and improper behaviors discouraged. Farm owners and managers should focus on:

- Developing a farm food safety plan that includes a worker health, hygiene and training policy.
- Educating workers about food safety risks and how to identify and reduce risks.
- Providing workers with all the resources they need to do their jobs properly.
- Enforcing the proper use of toilets and hand washing facilities.
- Paying attention to the health of workers.
- Encouraging workers to report injuries and illnesses.
- Keeping records of all training sessions, illness and injury reporting, and other food safety practices such as toilet and hand washing facility monitoring and cleaning.

**Templates and Sample Policies**

Recordkeeping templates and sample SOPs are provided as part of the *Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training Decision Tree*. These templates, SOPs and recordkeeping logs should be tailored to meet the needs of your farm, so modify them by adding practices you have in place or by removing practices that are not necessary on your farm.

The information in the template food safety plan, SOPs, and recordkeeping logs are examples you can use. They are not intended to be used directly. Tailor each to fit your farm operation and practices. These documents are guidance for risk reduction and for educational use only. These documents are not regulatory and are not intended to be used as audit metrics. These documents are subject to change without notice based on the best available science.
Do you hire any workers (including non-paid family members)?

1. Yes

   If you are the only worker on your farm, you must understand the risks associated with your own actions. Please review the practices outlined in this tree to make sure you know which practices you need to follow. In addition to knowing and following proper health and hygiene practices, as the only worker you are responsible for writing your farm food safety plan. Template food safety plan language about worker health, hygiene, and training is provided at the end of the decision tree to help you write your plan. Please continue through this decision tree.

2. No

   Have all workers received training in areas important to produce safety using a language they understand?
   This training should include:
   - How and when to properly wash their hands
   - The importance of being clean and wearing clean clothes to work
   - How to handle illnesses and injuries on the farm
   - Knowing how to complete all the farm food safety practices they are assigned

   Yes

   A worker education and training program that explains the microbial risks associated with farm work and emphasizes practices that can reduce these risks is essential to produce safety. Verbal and written training materials should be presented using a language workers understand. Proper hand washing and hygiene instructions are critical to minimizing the risk of contamination from workers. Training should include all farm food safety practices for which workers are responsible for completing.
Have workers been informed not to come to work if they are sick and instructed on how to report illnesses?

3

Yes

People who are ill or who have symptoms of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea can contaminate fruits and vegetables with harmful microorganisms and should not handle produce. Every farm should have an illness reporting policy that workers understand and can follow. Sick workers should stay at home.

Is a first aid kit available in a known and convenient location, and have workers been instructed how to respond to injuries on the farm?

4

Yes

A first aid kit should be stocked and available to all workers and visitors. Workers who have cuts or other injuries could contaminate fresh produce with bodily fluids such as blood. All workers need to be trained to respond to injuries including knowing the location of first aid supplies, how to wash and bandage minor cuts, and to wear gloves or other covering to provide a secondary barrier between the injury and produce they handle. All contaminated produce must be thrown away and the injury should be written on the injury reporting log and kept on file.

Are workers instructed to only take breaks in designated areas so that they are not eating, or smoking in the fields or near product in the packinghouse?

5

Yes

Eating or smoking should not be allowed in the field, packinghouse, or other production areas to prevent contamination. Workers must wash their hands after eating, drinking, smoking, using the toilet, or taking a break, and before returning to work. Workers must always wash their hands before handling produce.
Have workers been informed of the farm’s food safety policies and any other food safety practices they are responsible for implementing?

[Yes] Workers who know the farm’s food safety policies and who understand food safety risks, will be actively involved in the farm’s food safety program. Informing workers is particularly important if they have other food safety responsibilities such as monitoring toilet and hand washing facilities, pest control procedures, or other key steps that require implementation and recordkeeping.

[No]

Are there signs or posters in a language the workers understand reminding them to properly follow the farm’s food safety practices?

[Yes] An effective worker training program should be reinforced daily through signs posted in a language workers understand or with pictures that describe appropriate actions. These materials will also serve to remind visitors of the farm’s food safety policies.

[No]

Are records kept of worker training?

[Yes] Worker training is very important for food safety. Records of all training programs should be kept including information about what was covered, who taught the training, workers who attended, date, and the location. Some workers may require additional training, particularly if they are trained for specific tasks beyond basic health and hygiene practices.

[No]
Are visitors asked to sign in and read your visitor policy?

9

Yes

Visitors should be asked to sign in and acknowledge they have read the farm food safety policies that they need to follow while they are on the farm. This may include where they are allowed to visit, areas that are off limits, and your policies regarding hand washing and illness reporting.

9

No

Are there clean toilet and handwashing facilities for workers and visitors within a short (5 minute or 1/4 mile) walk of the fields?

10

Yes

All workers and visitors must have access to clean, conveniently located toilets and hand washing facilities to encourage use.

Yes

10

No

Is the toilet monitored for cleanliness, cleaned when dirty, and restocked when necessary?

11

Yes

Facilities must be cleaned on a regular schedule to make sure they are sanitary and well-stocked with soap, water, toilet paper, and paper towels. Toilets should be checked daily and they should be cleaned and restocked as needed, even if that requires maintenance before the scheduled times.

Yes

11

No

Soap, water, paper towels, and toilet paper MUST be provided. Lack of supplies makes training ineffective because workers and visitors cannot follow the required practices.
Are records kept for all toilet and hand washing facility monitoring, cleaning, and restocking as well as any other steps that may be taken to maintain food safety resources such as first aid kits?

Yes

Records should be kept for all toilet and hand washing facility monitoring, cleaning, and restocking. Some records may be kept daily and others weekly, but all actions need to be recorded. All other health and hygiene facilities maintenance should be recorded as well including monitoring and restocking first aid kits. **Helpful Tip:** Keep a clipboard with a log sheet and pen secured by string close to where recordkeeping needs to happen so it is convenient for workers to complete.

No

Finished
Sample SOP: Hand Washing

Revision: 2.0
Date: 07/16/14

1—Purpose
Describes the correct method for hand washing while working or visiting the farm.

2—Scope
Applies to all farm personnel including farm owners, and workers, and farm visitors.

3—Responsibility
Everyone on the farm should understand and practice proper hand washing, regardless of their job or activities on the farm.

4—Materials
- Sink
- Water
- Soap
- Single-use paper towels
- Trash can (preferably with a lid)

5—Procedure
Procedure to be completed before the beginning of work, after each break, after eating or smoking, after using the toilet, at the end of the day, and at any other time hands become dirty.

1. Wet hands with water.
2. Apply soap and lather. Be sure to wash the front and backs of hands as well as in between the fingers. Rub hands together for AT LEAST 20 seconds.
3. Rinse hands thoroughly.
4. Dry with a paper towel (and turn off faucet with used paper towel).
5. Throw the paper towel in the trash can.
Sample SOP: On-Farm Illness and Injury

Revision: 2.0
Date: 07/16/14

1—Purpose
Describes what to do when an illness or injury occurs on the farm.

2—Scope
Applies to all farm personnel including farm owners, and workers, and farm visitors.

3—Responsibility
Everyone on the farm should know what to do when an illness or injury occurs and what recordkeeping needs to be completed. Management needs to know where completed records are to be filed and stored.

4—Materials
- First aid kit
- Water
- Soap
- Single-use paper towels
- Telephone for 9-1-1
- Injury reporting log

5—Procedure
This procedure must be completed in the event of an illness or injury. Variation in response is directly related to the extent of the injury. In the event of an illness or injury:

1. Assess the area to make sure it is safe to enter and does not pose an immediate or continuing danger.
2. Determine the extent of the illness or injury. If life-threatening or severe, dial 9-1-1 and wait for emergency personnel while assisting the ill or injured person as best as possible.
3. If injury is a cut or scrape, thoroughly wash the area with soap and water. Apply antibacterial ointment and a bandage. If the cut is on the hands, also wear clean, disposable gloves over the bandages if you are handling fresh produce. If an illness, assist the person as needed. Assess whether they can drive themselves home or if they need transportation to a clinic or hospital.
4. Notify the farm owner or supervisor to make him/her aware of the illness or injury.
5. Check the area where the illness or injury occurred. If blood, vomit, or other bodily fluid is on equipment or a cleanable surface, wash the area with soap and water to remove the bodily fluid then apply a sanitizer.
   If any bodily fluid has come into contact with any fresh produce, throw the produce away.
6. Write down the details on the illness and injury reporting log and submit to management for review, filing, and storage.
Sample Visitor Health and Hygiene Policy

Welcome to our farm!

Food safety is a priority so please review and follow the visitor policy.

1. If you are ill, please come back another day to visit us. If you have diarrhea, jaundice, fever, sore throat, or are vomiting, you will not be allowed to enter the farm or packinghouse.

2. Please remove all jewelry and place in a pocket. If this is not possible, let your host know so an alternative safe storage spot can be provided. It is okay to wear a plain ring that does not contain a stone or jewel.

3. Please wash your hands at the beginning of your visit as well as after using the restroom or eating.

4. Eating is permitted only in designated areas. If you have any questions about the location of these areas, please ask your host.

5. Smoking is not allowed on our farm.

6. If required, please wear all protective gear provided for you.

7. If you are injured, tell your host immediately. Please let your host know if any blood or bodily fluid has come in contact with any surfaces or fresh produce, so we can clean the area and properly dispose of the contaminated produce.

8. Pets are not allowed on the farm, unless it is a service animal. To reduce food safety risks, service animal access may be limited in areas where fresh fruit and vegetable production, handling, or packing occurs.
## Sample Field Sanitation Unit Service Log

**Name of farm:** Pleasant Valley Farm

Please see the food safety plan for overall information on field sanitation unit service procedures. If contracted with a sanitation company, attach service/cleaning receipt.

### Sanitation Unit Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanitation unit #</th>
<th>Date of cleaning</th>
<th>Cleaned by (name)</th>
<th>Serviced by (name)</th>
<th>Supplies stocked* (list supplies)</th>
<th>Date of servicing</th>
<th>Serviced by</th>
<th>Supplies stocked**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6/12/13</td>
<td>Joe Anderson</td>
<td>Tom Miller</td>
<td>Paper towels, toilet paper, soap</td>
<td>5/8/13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**See field map for locations of each unit in fields.**

**Sanitation supplies are single-use towels, toilet paper, hand or anti-bacterial soap, potable water for hand washing.**

Reviewed by: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________


[www.gaps.cornell.edu](http://www.gaps.cornell.edu)
## Sample Illness/Injury Reporting Log

**Name of farm:** Pleasant Valley Farm

Please see the food safety plan for overall illness/injury reporting procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of employee</th>
<th>Injury/Illness reported</th>
<th>Action taken (ice applied, bandaged, sent to hospital, etc.)</th>
<th>Did employee return to work? (Yes or No)</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/20/13</td>
<td>Maria Gonzales</td>
<td>Cut finger while harvesting cabbage.</td>
<td>Cleaned wound, applied antiseptic, applied a bandage and gave her disposable gloves to wear.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>EAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sample First Aid Kit Monitoring Log

**Name of farm:** Pleasant Valley Farm

Please see the food safety plan for detailed first aid kit monitoring procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>First Aid Kit # or location</th>
<th>Checked (✓)</th>
<th>If restocked, list added items here (e.g. bandages, ointment)</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/18/13</td>
<td>Production area.</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Added another box of adhesive bandages.</td>
<td>EAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by: _____________________________________________ Title: ___________________________ Date: __________________
Sample Restroom Monitoring and Cleaning Log

Name of farm:  
Pleasant Valley Farm

Please see the food safety plan for detailed first aid kit monitoring procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Restroom # or location</th>
<th>Checked (√)</th>
<th>Cleaned (√)</th>
<th>Supplies filled/actions completed</th>
<th>Comments (e.g. special maintenance required)</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/30/13</td>
<td>#3</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>Cleaned the inside and emptied trash</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>EAB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by: ____________________________________________ Title: __________________________ Date: __________________________

On-Farm Decision Tree Project: Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training—v14 07/16/14
Sample Worker Training Log

Name of farm: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Trainer: ___________________________ Training time: ___________________________

Location: ___________________________

Training materials: Please attach any written materials and provide an outline of the training topics discussed. Also reference any relevant SOPs or sections of your farm food safety plan that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Name (please print)</th>
<th>Employee Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. _________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. _________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. _________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
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<td>4. _________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. ________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. ________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. ________________________</td>
<td>____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by: ___________________________ Title: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
# Sample Visitor Log

**Name of farm:** Pleasant Valley Farm

Please see the food safety plan for information on food safety procedures for visitors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Enter time</th>
<th>Exit time</th>
<th>Visitor (name)</th>
<th>Purpose of visit</th>
<th>Host (initials)</th>
<th>Read visitor policy (yes or no)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/4/13</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Jason Gointobe</td>
<td>Looking for new cabbage supplier</td>
<td>EAB</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reviewed by: ___________________________________________  Title: ___________________________  Date: ___________________________
Template Language for Worker Health, Hygiene, and Training Section of a Farm Food Safety Plan

Risk Assessment

Workers’ health and actions directly impact the safety of fruits and vegetables they harvest and pack. If workers are sick, do not wash their hands properly, or are not aware of food safety risks and practices that reduce risks, they could contaminate fresh produce while they work.

Actions to Reduce Risks

All workers on the farm are trained to follow the farm food safety plan. Worker training includes instructing workers to stay home if they are sick and to report any illnesses or injuries that occur while working. Workers are instructed to wash their hands before handling produce, after using the toilet, before starting or returning to work, before and after eating or smoking, and whenever their hands are dirty. This is important both for their health and for the safety of the fresh produce.

First aid kits are provided and the location of all first aid kits is reviewed during the training programs. First aid kits are regularly monitored and restocked when needed. This information is kept in the first aid log located [enter location here]. Workers are also instructed how to bandage minor cuts, cover them with a secondary barrier, and how to dispose of produce that may have been contaminated with bodily fluids such as vomit and blood. All illnesses, injuries, and accidents are written in the illness/injury reporting log located [enter location here].

Visitors also represent a food safety risk, so all visitors are required to review the visitor policy and follow company food safety policies as outlined. Visitors are asked to sign in when entering the farm and verify that they have read the policy. The Visitor Log is located [enter location here].

All workers and visitors have access to conveniently located, clean, and well-stocked toilets and hand washing facilities. Facilities are within a 5 minute or ¼ mile walk of the work locations. These facilities are monitored to ensure that they are clean and well-stocked. Actions to maintain all toilet and hand washing facilities are documented and located [enter location here].

Finally, all recordkeeping logs are reviewed by management [Can enter name of individual here if only one person] and kept on file for at least 2 years [enter location here].