

# Dept. of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection: Fruit and vegetable growers encouraged to sign-up for pre-inspection review and field day events

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MADISON – In order to meet requirements for the Food Safety Modernization Act, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is encouraging fresh produce growers to schedule a pre-inspection farm review. Referred to as an on-farm readiness review, it provides growers with information about what state and federal inspectors will look for to determine how a farm meets federal produce safety rules for the growing, harvesting, packing, and holding of fresh fruits and vegetables. DATCP has completed several reviews in June with 30 more currently scheduled through the summer.

“Growers have told us that the review helped them to better understand the federal rules through hands-on learning,” said Shawn Bartholomew, DATCP’s produce section supervisor for the Division of Food and Recreational Safety. “Since each produce farm operates differently, we are hoping more growers will take advantage of an on-farm readiness review. It gives growers a chance to ask questions based on their operation and time to make any changes to ensure they will pass an inspection.”

Prior to having a review, growers can see what a review is like by attending a field day event. Field days are open to the public, explain the purpose of the Safe Wisconsin Produce program, demonstrate the review process, provide information about tools available to prepare for an inspection, and provide participants with an

opportunity to ask questions of industry experts. In addition to DATCP's Safe Wisconsin Produce program staff, educators from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Division of Extension and industry partners are available to answer technical questions. Each field day is unique to represent the diversity of produce grown in Wisconsin. The dates and locations of the field days are:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Produce Focus</b>	<b>Location</b>
July 18	Tomatoes, melons, root crops, peas, and beans	Hancock Agricultural Research Station N3909 Cty Rd V Hancock, WI 54943
July 23	Tomatoes, melons, and salad greens	Spooner Agricultural Research Station W6646 Hwy 70 Spooner, WI 54801
August 22	Apples	Bushel and a Peck Orchard 18444 Cty Hwy OO Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
September 19	Tomatoes, salad greens, and vine crops	Sully's Produce 7054 Cty C Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Field days are free (with the exception of July 23 that includes a lunch). More information on how to register is available at <https://safeproduce.wi.gov>.

### **How to Schedule a Review**

To schedule a review, growers can do any of the following:

- Go to <https://safeproduce.wi.gov> and sign-up online for a date and time most convenient for them
- Email [safeproduce@wi.gov](mailto:safeproduce@wi.gov)
- Call (608) 224-4511
- Request one at any event where DATCP's Safe Wisconsin Produce program staff are at, including field day events, Farm Technology Days, Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service conference, and the Wisconsin Fruit and Vegetable conference
- Mail a request to:

DFRS Produce Team

WI DATCP

PO Box 8911

Madison WI 53708-8911

### **More Information**

Inspections for produce farms are based on the size of the farm. Large produce farm inspections began in June, while smaller farm inspections will not start until next year. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration defines a produce farm's size based on the following annual produce sales revenue:

- Large produce farm: More than \$500,000
- Small produce farm: \$250,000-\$500,00
- Very small produce farm: \$25,000-\$250,000

For more information about the Food Safety Modernization Act, the Produce Safety Rule, or DATCP's Safe Wisconsin Produce program, visit <https://safeproduce.wi.gov>.

Wisconsin ranks 11th in the nation in number of produce farms, and second in number of organic produce farms. There are an estimated 1,100 Wisconsin farms that will have to meet federal produce safety regulations.