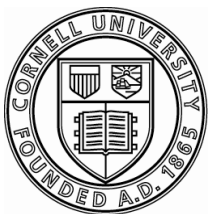
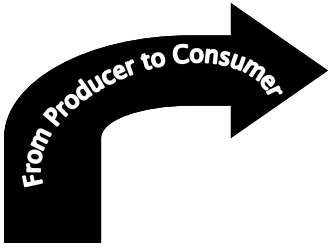


FOOD SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGRITOURISM



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Jefferson County





FOOD SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AGRITOURISM

Agritourism farms have learned the key to bringing consumers to the countryside is to build fun and education into the experience of purchasing farm raised foods. Therefore, agritourism is the most complex of farm direct marketing activities. Each farm works hard to develop new and exciting activities and events that will draw consumers to their farm where they can purchase farm products and have experiences that will build memories and keep them coming back year after year.

Agritourism farmers feel that adding activities and events helps bring consumers to the farm. Often the farms are a significant distance from a population center or well off a main road. Entertainment encourages consumers and families to drive that extra distance, as it becomes a fun family event. Agritourism farmers also find this to be a valuable tool to introduce large numbers of consumer to their farm products and build sales revenues. Finally, the activities themselves are critical components to the farm's profits, maintaining the farm's ability to keep the land in active production and sustain the farm family.

Agritourism farmers must wear a multitude of hats. First, they are producers and have all the workload and issues that come with food production. Second, they are retailers. It is important that they excel at marketing skills to showcase their farm products in an appealing way that will encourage farm visitors to purchase their farm products and bring home the flavor of the farm, both in food and in memories of a farm-filled day. Third, they are hosts. An agritourism farmer incorporates a number of activities and events which require them to play host or hostess to their farm visitors. Finally, they are party planners, always looking for the next new event or activity that will draw consumers' attention and bring them out to the farm. Once they have discovered that next new activity, they must be able to implement it to entertain their farm visitors, build farm revenue and keep the activity safe for the consumers. Many of the activities found on agritourism farms are just for fun and entertainment, such as corn mazes and wagon rides. However, many of the activities revolve around food or have the potential to impact food safety concerns on the farm. While all activities require sound practices to ensure the safety of guests, activities that involve food, including the sale of the farm's raw food products, require food safety procedures to protect the farm's visitors and ensure the farm's continued success.



In order to reduce food safety risks and prevent the likelihood of foodborne illness outbreaks at your farm direct marketing venue, each farmer needs to understand how to identify risks and implement practices to mitigate these risks. This document is intended to help farmers understand what microbiological, chemical, and physical hazards exist, assess the risks associated with these hazards, and adopt outlined recommendations that can reduce these risks. Each farmer must perform their own risk assessment and determine which guidelines are most appropriate for their operation.

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION: GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: WATER

Water is a basic ingredient of life. It is an essential part of foods and as a drink, it quenches thirst and sustains bodies. It also impacts food safety because it is involved in so many farm related activities. Hand washing and proper food handling are important to prevent contamination, reduce risks, and ensure postharvest quality. However, water can be a source of bacteria that can contaminate foods causing serious illness and death. During the Washington County Fair in 1999, a well used to both prepare food and drinks was contaminated with *E coli O157:H7*. This contamination was caused by run-off from a hard rain on drought-parched soil that passed through a cattle barn on its way to the underground aquifer. The food and drink produced from this well caused over 1000 people to become sick with 65 requiring hospitalization. It also resulted in the death of 2 people.

This illustration shows the impact water quality can have on the health of our consumers. It is important to understand the quality of the water being used and its intended uses. Testing of all water sources will ensure consumers the water is safe for drinking, for hand washing and any water used in the preparation of foods is clean and bacteria-free. While requirements may vary from county to county, generally, nonpublic water sources will need coliform bacteria testing on a quarterly basis during the months of operation and a nitrate test annually. Test results should be maintained on file as proof of testing. If obtaining a food service permit from the Health Department, test results will be required for the permit application, as well as reported with each subsequent test.

Water used for the production of fresh fruits and vegetables can also impact safety. All water sources used for fruit and vegetable production should be tested. Surface water sources should be tested for quantified, generic *E.coli*. These non-potable water sources can be used in the field during production, particularly if the edible portion of the crop is not contacted by the water or if the water is applied early in the season when no fruit has developed. Water used at harvest or for any postharvest handling steps should be potable (free from microbial contamination).

RECOMMENDATION: All water being used for food preparation, hand washing and drinking, that is not from a municipal source, must have microbiological testing conducted prior to each season opening and as often as required by county regulatory agencies.

References:

www.health.state.ny.us/environmental/water/drinking/regulations

2. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: PRODUCTS

There is a wide variety of products being sold at on-farm locations, from fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, maple, honey, wines, prepared foods, processed foods, to plants, fresh cut flowers and crafts. Each product may have health code regulations that must be adhered to. See the Farmers Market Federation of NYS checklist, attached, for regulatory permits and licenses required, based on the products sold.

Production and Post-Harvest Handling Farm producers should grow, harvest, and handle food products under Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). These procedures have been developed as a means to minimize food contamination and reduce the chances of food borne illnesses. Farmers should consider the positive marketing impact of being able to tell their consumers they are concerned about their welfare, understand the risk involved, and have implemented GAPs to help ensure the safety of all the commodities they grow.

It should be noted that a small scale producer is no safer than a large scale producer, nor do production methods (e.g., organic, biodynamic, etc.) alter the inherent safety of the foods produced. Rather, it is important that each producer realize that there is no zero risk to farming, so they need to identify the risks, and adhere to GAPs practices that are scaled to each producer's farm practices and needs to reduce the risks that exist.

RECOMMENDATION: Know and understand GAPs standards and utilize GAPs during production and post-harvest handling of fruits and vegetables.

Washing Produce Washing, or more appropriately, rinsing fruits and vegetables to remove field debris, can be an important step in providing safe foods for consumers; however, it does not ensure the foods are free from contaminants. Therefore, it is important to understand that produce washed at the farm is not a ready-to-eat food. To be a ready-to-eat food requires a food service license from the health department and then washing under food service protocols. Instead, any washed produce is simply to make the product more appealing, and therefore more marketable.



Produce coming in from the fields with a high level of organic matter attached can be rinsed in a single pass method; e.g. rinsed under running water. If washing in a sink, dunk tank or other submersible means, a disinfectant should be added to the water to prevent any contamination that may be present from spreading. Disinfectants added to water (even single pass water) can also improve the shelf life of the produce by helping to control plant pathogens and spoilage organisms.

RECOMMENDATION: All water used in post-harvest handling should be potable.

RECOMMENDATION: All water used in a communal or dunk tank must contain a disinfectant with levels monitored for effectiveness.

RECOMMENDATION: Signs should be posted with a message to consumers to thoroughly rinse all produce in cool, running water before consumption.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower Self Assessment of Food Safety Risks, <http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/farmassessmentws.html>

3. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: FARMER/EMPLOYEES

To maintain high quality foods and ensure the safety of the foods being sold to consumers, farm families and employees should be trained in GAPs with special emphasis on proper personal hygiene practices. GAPs training is important to educate all who work with the foods produced on the farm to understand the principles involved in providing safe food. In addition, all farm family members and employees should be trained in the regulations that cover the foods being sold, including NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets regulations, as well as NYS Department of Health regulations. This will help all who work with customers to recognize potential risks and work to minimize those risks.

The most important personal hygiene step that can reduce risks on the farm is proper hand washing. All family members and employees need to be trained how and when to properly wash their hands. Before beginning work and after using the toilet, eating and smoking are just a few of the times that all those working on the farm should wash their hands. Injuries, including cuts and open wounds, should be immediately cleaned and covered with a bandage. Gloves should then be worn as an extra barrier to protect the food from being contaminated with blood or blood-borne pathogens.

All those on the farm should bathe daily and wear clean clothes. It is as much a marketing tool as it is a food safety precaution. Clean clothes, hair and body present a good image and minimize the risk of spreading bacteria, germs and contaminants from person to product. All eating, drinking, and smoking should be done in designated locations to ensure everyone is properly washing their hands before returning to work and that their personal items do not contaminate farm products.

RECOMMENDATION: All farmers and employees should have clean body, hair and clothes and be free from any signs of illness or open sores.

RECOMMENDATION: All employees must wash hands before beginning work and any time they become soiled, i.e. after using restroom facilities, handling live animals, eating and drinking. Note that anti-bacterial gels are not a substitute for hand washing.

RECOMMENDATION: Smoking should not be allowed while selling and/or handling food. NYS Health Laws prohibit smoking where food is being handled, whether it is preparation or the sale of food. Designated areas should be provided for breaks so employees can eat, drink, and smoke in a safe area.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower Self Assessment of Food Safety Risks, <http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/farmassessmentws.html>

4. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

Farm buildings have many uses, but when they are used as locations to store or market food crops, farmers need to consider the impact they can have on safety. Basic building maintenance is important to deter pest intrusion, including insects and rodents. Doors should be kept closed when not in use and windows should be screened. A pest monitoring and control program should be in place in all farm buildings that are used to store and market food. All food should be stored off the ground to eliminate contamination from pests, rodents, dust and dirt.



Many farm buildings will have walk-in coolers to store harvested foods that are waiting to be sold or to be delivered to other sales venues. The cooler is vital to maintaining the quality of foods, removing field heat and maintaining the product at a cool temperature to slow down the rate of deterioration. All coolers should be clean and kept clean throughout the time they hold food. The cooler should have a temperature gauge to allow monitoring the temperature inside. Also, a plastic curtain that allows easy in and out will help maintain the temperature when employees frequently enter and exit the cooler.

RECOMMENDATION: Maintain buildings and establish pest monitoring and control programs in farm buildings that store and market food.

RECOMMENDATION: Foods should be stored off the floor and not in direct contact with the cooler walls.

RECOMMENDATION: Cooler walls, ceiling and floor should be easily cleanable and periodically sanitized to eliminate the build-up of dirt, debris and mold.

RECOMMENDATION: Condensation within a cooler should be prevented from dripping on food products or food containers.

Lighting in a farm market may be necessary, as much for personal safety as for highlighting the foods on display. Most lighting would be overhead, whether fluorescent or HFC. When the light burns out, it can cause the bulb to fracture, sending shards of glass and chemical contaminants to rain down. It is critical that these light fixtures be covered to contain any fallout from bulb failures.

RECOMMENDATION: Lighting fixtures should be covered to prevent contamination of food products should the lights break.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: A Grower Self Assessment of Food Safety Risks, <http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/farmassessmentws.html>



Bathrooms Every farm should have bathroom facilities for their customers, providing for their needs and comfort. That doesn't mean the farm must build public restrooms, instead, port-a-johns can be used. When locating a port-a-john, it should be close enough to be convenient, but kept at enough distance so any spill will not come into contact with food being sold or crops being grown. In addition, the port-a-john should be serviced regularly and service records maintained to show the frequency of cleaning. A spill containment plan should also be in place. Along with port-a-johns, or any toilet facilities, is the need for a hand washing station. The hand washing station should be maintained outside of the port-a-john. This will prevent urine splash or unintentional contamination and promote hand washing when its use is visible to all. The hand washing station requires potable water, soap, a catch basin for gray-water, single use towels, and garbage cans for used towels. Hands-free operating faucets are a great option, but if not available, users can be instructed on how to turn faucets off with a paper towel following proper hand washing. There must also be signage posted at the hand washing station that "Employees must wash hands before returning to work."

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION: FARM STORE


Agritourism farms incorporate a wide variety of facilities to accommodate the sale of their farm products, as well as the various farm activities. A farm store usually is front and center. This is the place where farm products are displayed for sale. This is where the center of activity begins – bringing families into the farm store to choose and/or pay for the events they will participate in while visiting the farm.

5. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: DISPLAY

Common sense plays a significant role in ensuring the display of food in a manner that will prevent contamination. Displays should be designed to reduce consumer handling of products. Employees should be trained to recognize cross contamination events so they can remove items that may have been contaminated by touching the floor or through handling.

Consumer reach for product should fall between knee and shoulder height to maximize sales opportunities. This is as much a marketing tool as it is a food safety issue. Food that is displayed off the ground eliminates potential contamination from animals and pests, as well as soil and ground debris.

RECOMMENDATION: All foods should be kept off the ground or floor.



Meats sold through on-farm sales should be packaged from a USDA slaughterhouse and stored in a separate location so that they cannot cross contaminate other food items. While the packaging minimizes the risk of contamination, leaks do occur. If storing in a common cooler, raw meats and other potentially hazardous food such as eggs and seafood, need to be kept in a designated area where there is no opportunity for leaks to drip on other food items or on the floor. Pans can be kept under meat in a cooler to isolate any leaks that may occur.

RECOMMENDATION: Foods on display should be segregated from potentially hazardous foods to ensure there is no cross contamination; particularly raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.

Display Material The potential for contaminating food may come directly from the containers farmers use to store extra product, as well as the display table and the containers used to display the foods. To minimize the risk of contamination, containers should be regularly cleaned and, if possible, sanitized. All containers should be kept covered to minimize the risk of contamination. Display surfaces should be cleaned and, if possible, sanitized between uses or covered with clean tablecloths to provide a clean surface.

RECOMMENDATION: Storage and display containers should be free from food residue and other debris and cleaned and sanitized regularly.

RECOMMENDATION: Display surfaces should be clean and sanitized before each use.

Consumer Packaging Once a bag has been used, it should never be reused for the sale of foods as it could be contaminated with soil, spoiled food particles, blood from meat, etc. In addition, bags should be made of food grade materials to prevent the leaching of harmful chemicals into food.

RECOMMENDATION: Bags for foods sold to consumers should be made from food grade materials that do not leach.

Reusing egg cartons is a common practice. Environmentally conscious consumers will return egg cartons when they are ready to purchase another. Farmers should consider the risk of contamination when choosing to reuse them. All prior markings, including producer identification, grade and size statements should be removed. The cartons should be clean, free of any residue, and re-labeled with the farmer's identification, according to NYS Labeling Laws.

RECOMMENDATION: Using only new egg cartons is the safest action. If reusing cartons, all prior markings, including producer identification, grade and size statements should be removed from used egg cartons. The cartons should be clean and free of any residue, and re-labeled with the farmer's identification, according to NYS Labeling Laws.

RECOMMENDATION: Shell eggs must be held at 45° or below.

Temperature Controls With both indoor and outdoor displays at on-farm sales venues, care must be taken to maintain the proper temperature of foods.

Outside of the recommended temperature ranges, bacteria will grow at an accelerated rate. Any foods requiring temperature control and held outside of the recommended temperature ranges for 2 hours or longer should be destroyed.

When using a cooler to maintain cold or frozen foods, a thermometer should be available to test the temperature throughout each day to ensure the appropriate temperature range is being maintained. In addition, the ice being used must be made from potable water. The cooler should have proper drainage for ice melt to prevent food products from sitting in water. In addition, ice melt should be collected and disposed of properly.

RECOMMENDATION: All potentially hazardous and prepared/processed foods must be prepackaged. Foods prepared on site under New York State Health Department Temporary Food Service Permit must be displayed under a protective cover, to prevent contamination.

RECOMMENDATION: All prepackaged foods must be labeled in accordance with New York State Labeling laws.

RECOMMENDATION: While on display all hot foods MUST remain hot, 140°F* or above, cold foods MUST remain cold, 41°F or below, with shell eggs held at 45°F or below, and frozen foods MUST remain frozen, 0°F or below.

**There are differences in temperature requirements determined by the regulatory agency. The recommendations above comply with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, as well as the NYS Department of Health.*

Animals on the Farm Farm animals being raised for meat or milk are part of many farm operations. Family pets can also be found on the farmstead. With the rural nature of farms, wild animals are often present; often wandering the farm fields, making their way on to the farmstead itself. Unfortunately, animals, whether domesticated or wild, can carry pathogens and the potential for disease. Care must be taken to eliminate animals from food areas.

RECOMMENDATION: All animals should be excluded from areas where food is being grown, harvested, prepared for sale, or being sold.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Food Safety at Farmers Markets and Agritourism Venues: A Primer for California Operators, http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/farmers_market/food_safety.pdf

Farmers Market Guidelines: Minimum requirements for food safety, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, http://oregon.gov/ODA/FSD/docs/pdf/guide_farmer_mkt.pdf

Food Safety Regulations for Farmers Markets, Purdue Extension, <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-740.pdf>

Safe Food Handling at Open Markets, Kansas State University Extension, <http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/FOODASYST/8market.pdf>

Small Farms Task Force: **A Resource Guide to Direct Marketing Livestock and Poultry**, <http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com/publications/ResourceGuideDirectMarketingMeatPoultry.pdf>

Food Handler Certification:

http://www.servsafe.com/RegRequirements/rr_state_juris_summ.aspx?st=New%20York&id=119

6. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: CONSUMER CONTAMINATION

Consumers themselves can be the cause of food contamination. Dirty hands, sneezing, even children who take a little taste, can contaminate foods. Farmers should provide supervision over their displays to guard against such possibilities, removing any products that have been potentially contaminated. In addition, consumers should be encouraged to follow proper food handling and preparation techniques. Signs can be posted encouraging consumers to maintain the cold chain by quickly refrigerating foods when they get home and rinsing all fresh produce in cool water before it is consumed.

RECOMMENDATION: Signs should be posted for consumers indicating, “Food Safety is a Priority at our Farm. Please wash your hands after using the restroom, touching animals, eating or any time they are dirty.”

References: Fight BAC campaign, www.fightbac.org



POTENTIAL SOURCES OF CONTAMINATION AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES

7. POTENTIAL SOURCE OF CONTAMINATION: FOOD SERVICE

Many agritourism operations include food service as a key component of their operation. Offering their consumers snacks or meals means their customers can stay longer, absorbing more of the farm experience, and spending more of their dollars on farm products and activities. Food service can be a snack-shack or barbecue, where consumers get their food as a take-away and eat at nearby picnic tables, or it can be a café or restaurant type service, offering sit down table service. Other farm activities involving food service may include on-farm bakeries, school tours, kid's parties and corporate picnics.

RECOMMENDATION: Food service must follow the requirements of the State Sanitary Code for Food Service Establishments.

Licensing All food service requires a food service permit from the county's Health Department. The requirements may vary from county to county, but generally require an approved kitchen, water testing on non-municipal sources of water and periodic inspections. On-farm bakeries are licensed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. However, a farm will only require one license. The predominant activity determines the regulatory agency. Therefore, if food service is the primary concern, then the County Health Department will license the entire operation.

RECOMMENDATION: All foods must be prepared in a commercial kitchen with an appropriate Department of Health Permit.

Employees Food service workers must adhere to food safety protocols and follow the recommendations for all farm employees as outlined above. In addition to these guidelines, additional care must be taken to prevent unintended contamination of foods being served.

RECOMMENDATION: No bare hand contact is allowed on ready-to-eat foods.

RECOMMENDATION: Food service workers should always wear hair restraints when handling foods.

RECOMMENDATION: Food service workers should not eat or drink in food preparation areas.

RECOMMENDATION: Food service workers should thoroughly wash hands and exposed areas of the arms before beginning work, after using the toilet, smoking, sneezing, coughing, eating, drinking or whenever they become soiled. Fingernails should be clean and trimmed.

Temperature controls When preparing foods, whether indoors in an approved kitchen or outdoors over a barbecue grill, all foods must be cooked to proper internal temperatures and maintained at the appropriate temperature until served to the consumer.

RECOMMENDATION: Hot foods **MUST** remain hot, 140°F* or above, cold foods **MUST** remain cold, 45°F or below.

Food storage requires special care to prevent contamination.

RECOMMENDATION: Raw meats and other potentially hazardous foods must be kept segregated from other foods.

RECOMMENDATION: Foods should be stored separate from any other materials, such as cleaning supplies, chemicals and any other toxic materials.

Sanitation

A clean food service facility is as much of a marketing tool as it is a health department regulation. By following the requirements set down by the Department of Health, a farm can minimize the risks of food borne illness.

RECOMMENDATION: All food service areas must be made of easily cleanable materials and maintained clean and sanitized.

RECOMMENDATION: All food service materials, such as pots, pans, and utensils, should be cleaned, sanitized and stored in a manner that will maintain their cleanliness.

RECOMMENDATION: All tables should be cleaned and sanitized between uses.

RECOMMENDATION: When requiring farm guests to bus their own tables, adequate garbage containers must be made available and should be emptied frequently enough to prevent spillover.

RECOMMENDATION: Garbage containers should be durable, easily cleanable, insect proof and rodent proof. Tight fitting lids are required on outdoor garbage containers.

RECOMMENDATION: Premises must be free of insects and rodents.

Outdoor food service Many agritourism farms offer barbecues or other forms of outdoor food service to their farm guests. The out-of-doors dining experience goes hand in hand with the whole farm experience and farm guests will spend time and money at such an event. While adhering to the regulations of a Health Department Food Service Permit and the above outlined food safety recommendations, there are considerations inherent in outdoor food preparation.

RECOMMENDATION: Fire extinguishing equipment should be fully charged and in close proximity to the cooking area. Check with your county codes office for types of equipment needed.

RECOMMENDATION: All animals, except service animals, should be prohibited from food preparation and dining areas.

Reference:

Food Service Establishments, Chapter 1 State Sanitary Code, Subpart 14-1

Food Safety at Farmers Markets and Agritourism Venues: A Primer for California Operators, http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/farmers_market/food_safety.pdf

8. POTENTIAL FOR CONTAMINATION: FARM ANIMAL DISPLAYS

For many families visiting agritourism farms, learning about agriculture begins with a visit to a farm animal display. Children love the animals and will bring their parents back to the farm often to be able to see the animals. Agritourism farmers find animal displays help draw customers to their farms.

When setting up a farm animal display, an agritoursim farm should first check with their county for any local regulations. Some counties will not allow farm guests to touch the animals they are viewing. Other counties may require permits.

In addition to following county regulations to set up a farm animal display, there are cautions that should be heeded to protect consumers' health. Farm animals carry pathogens and customers need to understand the risk posed by farm animal displays and the risk to customers must be minimized. If the farm does both animal displays and u-pick, hand washing is critical as well as ensuring that shoes do not transfer fresh manure from animal barns into u-pick fields.



RECOMMENDATION: All live animals for display should be maintained segregated and downwind from food displays.

RECOMMENDATION: Consumers should be prohibited from eating in the animal display area.

RECOMMENDATION: Entrances and exits to farm animal display should be defined, creating a unidirectional traffic pattern. A hand washing station should be located at the exit with signage that says "Please wash hands after touching the animals and/or fencing, as well as before handling food products."

9. POTENTIAL FOR CONTAMINATION: FARM WINERY

Although wine is a relatively safe food product, farm wineries must follow Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Operating under license from the New York State Liquor Authority, a farm winery comes under annual inspection by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The Department uses GMP as the basis for the inspections.

It is a consumer expectation to be given the opportunity to taste the wine before purchase, therefore, most farm wineries provide wine tasting and sampling opportunities. Sampling is food service, therefore, it requires a food service permit issued by the county Health Department, with specific permit requirements varying from county to county. The focus of this section will be on the sampling of wines rather than on the manufacturing of the wine.

RECOMMENDATION: The countertop or surface used for serving should be cleaned and sanitized after each seating of patrons.

RECOMMENDATION: Either use one-time use containers for tasting and throw them away after each use or meet the commercial standards for cleanliness and sanitizing of glasses after each use. Alternatively, glasses may be given to the customer as a souvenir of their farm winery visit.

Some wineries may provide food samples as well. In terms of sampling food, wineries come under the same regulations as any other direct market venue and samples. These regulations may vary by county. Any samples that are made need to be made in an approved facility.

RECOMMENDATION: Food sampling must follow the 'Food Sampling Guidelines for Direct Marketing Venues' as outlined in the attached reference.

**Attachment:
Food Sampling Guidelines for Direct Marketing Venues**

References: Current Good Manufacturing Practice in Manufacturing, Packing, or Holding Human Food. http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/textidx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title21/21cfr110_main_02.tpl

10. **POTENTIAL FOR CONTAMINATION: PICK-YOUR-OWN OPERATIONS**

Families find picking their own produce, whether it's apples or tomatoes, to be a fun, family experience. They enjoy the outdoors and time together as a family. While they're at it, they are learning about agriculture and what it takes for a farmer to bring quality fruits and vegetables to market. They learn about seasonality of local produce and experience firsthand the backbreaking work of harvesting, but also the satisfaction of hard work and baskets of fresh produce. In the end, the family goes home with happy memories and high quality food for the family.

Animals in the field/orchard Keeping pick-your-own operations (PYO) safe for consumers is a key concern for farmers to consider. First, the field or orchard needs to be made ready for consumers. Animals do present a risk to consumers through touching and fecal material. Therefore, animals should be kept out of the fields or orchards. If the farm uses working dogs in the fields or orchards, they should be removed on the days that consumers will be in the field/orchard.

RECOMMENDATION: No family pets should be allowed in the PYO fields or orchards.

Preparing the fields Some PYO farms use straw or other mulches in the rows, both for weed suppression and to provide a cleaner, more comfortable material for consumer-pickers. Mulches that have been previously used, such as for animal bedding, will be contaminated and should not be re-used.

RECOMMENDATION: Any straw or mulch material must be clean and free from contaminants.



Bathroom facilities Port-a-johns, may be used in the PYO fields or orchards for the comfort of customers. The port-a-johns should be located close to the field, but far enough away that potential spills would not reach harvestable crops. Along with port-a-johns, or any toilet facilities, is the need for a hand washing station. The hand washing station should be maintained outside of the port-a-john. This will prevent back splash and promote hand washing when its use is visible to all. Hand washing stations require potable water, soap, a catch basin for gray-water, single use towels, and a garbage can for used towels. Hands-free operating faucets are a great option, but if not available, users can be instructed on how to turn faucets off with a paper towel following proper hand washing. There must be signage posted at the hand washing station that "Employees/Vendors must wash hands before returning to work."

In addition, the port-a-john contractor should be able to provide service records to show the frequency of cleaning. The contractor should also have a spill containment plan that is shared with the PYO farm and workable for the farm.

Visitor protections Customers should also be aware of risks associated with PYO. For example, many consumers are unaware of the rugged conditions of fields and orchards and do not come prepared with the proper shoes and clothing. Some sort of customer education needs to accompany the PYO visit to ensure it is a positive experience. Customers also need to understand that fruits and vegetables being picked are not ready-to-eat foods and should not be consumed in the field or orchard without washing first.

RECOMMENDATION: Visitors should be made aware that fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly rinsed in cold running water before consumption.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm, A Grower Self Assessment of Food Safety Risks



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOD SAFETY: TRACEABILITY

One of the concerns of the FDA in food borne illness outbreaks is being able to trace the tainted food back to the source of contamination. For food processors this may involve batch coding and elaborate electronic tracking systems to follow each batch through the food system. For agritourism farms, this is much simpler since there is a direct sale from farmer to consumer. Farmers should make every effort to identify their farm, as well as their product, allowing consumers to track where their food comes from. Farm records should be kept to identify the field, harvest date and field worker(s) who harvested for each week's product offering. Likewise, all producer information should be on hand for products purchased for resale. Again, this is also a valuable marketing tool, as it makes it easier for consumers to return to their favorite agritourism farm.

Farmers should also consider other ways they can keep their farm name in front of customers, such as table signage that includes the farm name, stickers on picking/sales containers, farm brochures, business cards and name tags on clothing.

In addition, any products offered for sale that are not produced on the farm should be traceable to the place of origin. Records should be maintained to identify the product, farm location and contact information of each product purchased for resale.

Finally, it is important that each farm have a plan in place to identify the source of foods; i.e. field harvested from, when the foods were harvested or produced, and the farm family member or employee who handled the foods. A Harvest Log can be maintained to show all relevant information to help trace the source should an illness occur.

References:

Food Safety Begins on the Farm: Good Agricultural Practices for Fresh Fruits & Vegetables, www.gaps.cornell.edu/

Attachment:

Traceability Procedures

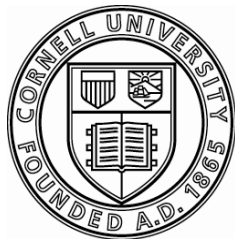
Harvest Logs

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