



Food Safety Requirements for Horticulture

Food Safety Management Statement (FSMS)

FSMS FACT SHEET

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand have introduced new food safety and compliance standards for berries, leafy vegetables and melons into the national Food Standards Code. These Standards will take effect from 12 February 2025 and will be regulated in Victoria by Agriculture Victoria.

Will you have to complete an online FSMS?

If you are a producer of leafy vegetables or melons and not in a Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) scheme (e.g. Freshcare), you must have and follow an approved food safety management statement (FSMS). Berry growers are not required to complete a FSMS. The FSMS will form part of the mandatory online registration process and will need to be reviewed, approved, and verified by Agriculture Victoria as part of an on-farm audit.

FSMS Quick Bites



Your FSMS will be completed as part of the online registration process through Agriculture Victoria Connect. The form includes yes/no questions, multiple choice questions and short responses.



You will not be required to upload any documentation at the time of registration, but it will be helpful to have it during the process. You will be provided with a copy of your FSMS once your registration is completed and approved by Agriculture Victoria.



Agriculture Victoria will undertake an on-farm audit to verify your FSMS, and to review relevant documents. This may occur annually.

The online FSMS questions will help you to understand what documentation you will need for the on-farm audit and to ensure ongoing food safety.

To complete the online FSMS you will need information, including existing policies and procedures, to show how you manage the following:

- Your process for traceability: how you trace from paddock through to supplier
- Your inputs: seed, seedling, soil, fertiliser, and water
- Your growing site(s): how you manage weather events, animals, pests and other potential contaminants
- Your premises and equipment: systems that ensure premises and equipment are routinely kept in a clean and sanitised (where applicable) condition
- Your staff's food safety and hygiene skills and knowledge: evidence of food safety and hygiene training
- Your systems to manage unacceptable and unsafe product: the measure you have in place to identify, isolate and manage unacceptable horticulture produce.

Need help?



Fresh Produce Safety Centre

Access the food safety helpdesk and multi-language grower guides to help you understand food safety requirements

Example Questions

- What **water sources** are used on site? Is microbiological testing on water sources conducted to ensure suitability for the intended use? What potential hazards impact the use of water at this site and how are the hazards managed?
- What is the origin of **soil amendments, fertilisers, and compost** used for relevant production? Do you have evidence from your suppliers that compost complies with the relevant Australian Standard AS4454?
- For all equipment items, how do you ensure that they are not a source of potential contamination? Do you have **cleaning and sanitation procedures**? What evidence do you keep of your cleaning and sanitising practices?
- Do you monitor the **temperature of harvested crops**? How is temperature monitored and what is the target temperature range?
- How do you manage **severe weather events**? How do you manage produce that has been touched by floodwater? Do you have windbreaks to decrease the impact of dust storms?
- Does your site have any **known natural contaminants** that may concentrate in your crops above Maximum Limits (MLs) or any persistent agricultural and veterinary chemicals above Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs)?

Register and complete your FSMS



Producers and processors are required to log into Agriculture Victoria Connect from **12 February 2025** to complete their food safety registration. If required, you will automatically be directed to complete the online FSMS.

Use the QR code to access Agriculture Victoria Connect.

