

**Buy Local, Buy Safely!**  
**A Guide for Evaluating Food Safety Practices at Local Produce Farms**  
**Checklist**

Instructions

The following six topic tables describe Guiding Principles and supporting Best Practices that growers may use to improve the safety of their produce. For each Guiding Principle, check the box next to each food safety Best Practice used by the grower. Record the number of checkmarks in Column A to the right of the table and multiply the number of checkmarks by the number of points listed in Column B. Record the total as a subtotal in Column C. (Round scores that end in .99 up to the nearest whole number.) The highest possible score for each Guiding Principle is 4. Add the subtotals to determine the total score for each topic table and record those total scores below. Add the scores below to calculate the overall score.

I. WATER	_____
II. SOIL AMENDMENTS	_____
III. FIELD LOCATION	_____
IV. PERSONNEL	_____
V. FIELD SANITATION	_____
VI. PACKING SHED SANITATION	_____
<b>OVERALL SCORE (ADD ALL ABOVE)</b>	_____

Results

The highest score possible is 100. A score between 95 and 100 indicates that all but a few Best Practices have been adopted. To identify specific Best Practices that could be adopted, review the subtotal scores in each table. Guiding Principles in which the score is zero indicate a need for improvement.

## I. WATER

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
<p>A. Best-quality water is used when working with harvested product.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Potable water is used for post-harvest operations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Food-grade sanitizing agent is added to potable water used for post-harvest operations.</p>		2	
<p>B. Water sources should be protected from contamination via run-off, flooding, animal agriculture operations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3. Municipal water supply used.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4. Backflow prevention devices used.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5. Private well is used and it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• properly constructed and sealed</li> <li>• upslope from animal agriculture operations</li> <li>• protected from run-off and separated from animals by fencing.</li> </ul>		1.33	
<p>C. Direct contact between irrigation water and produce should be minimized.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6. Drip or furrow (not spray) irrigation is used.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7. Irrigation water is regularly tested for fecal indicator bacteria; practices are adjusted, based on test results.</p> <p>If irrigation is not done, check this box <input type="checkbox"/> and count as 2 checks in column to the right.</p>		2	
<p>D. Best-quality water should be used for spraying.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8. Potable water is used for spraying OR food-grade sanitizing agent is added to non-potable water used for spraying.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9. Spray reservoirs are cleaned between uses.</p>		2	
<p>E. If water is re-used, the re-use should be done counter to process flow and/or sanitizing agents should be added to the water.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10. Re-use is done counter to process flow.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 11. Sanitizing agent is added to water.</p> <p>If water is not re-used, check this box <input type="checkbox"/> and count as 2 checks in column to the right.</p>		2	
<b>WATER TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 20)</b>			

## II. SOIL AMENDMENTS

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
<p>F. If manure is used as fertilizer, it should be properly composted or applied far enough in advance of harvest. (Check ONE box for the practice that best describes what is done.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 12. Manure is composted in accordance with National Organic Program (NOP) standards: C : N ratio between 25 : 1 and 40 : 1; in-vessel or static aerated pile is between 131 and 170°F for at least 3 days; windrow composting is between 131 and 170°F for at least 15 days and compost is turned at least 5 times.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 13. Manure is not used as fertilizer.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 14. Manure is composted but not in accordance with NOP standards. Manure is applied at least 90 days (non-exposed crops) or 120 days (exposed crops) before harvest.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 15. Manure is NOT composted, but is applied at least 90 days (non-exposed crops) or 120 days (exposed crops) before harvest.</p>		4	
<p>G. In-process and finished composted manure should be stored to prevent cross-contamination.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 16. Composting area is down-slope from produce fields.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 17. Composting area is down-slope from water source.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 18. Finished composted manure is stored separately and up-slope from in-process composting manure.</p>		1.33	
<b>SOIL AMENDMENT TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 8)</b>			

**III. FIELD LOCATION**

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A. NO. OF CHECK MARKS</b>	<b>B. POINTS</b>	<b>C. SUB TOTAL (A X B)</b>
H. Field topography should prevent run-off contamination of produce. <input type="checkbox"/> 19. The field is up-slope from adjacent fields or water sources. <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Run-off barriers protect the fields.		2	
I. Previous field uses should not leave a potential reservoir of disease-causing microbes. <input type="checkbox"/> 21. The field has not been used for animal agriculture within the past 3 years.		4	
J. Adjacent fields should not be a reservoir of disease-causing microbes <input type="checkbox"/> 22. The adjacent fields have not been used for animal agriculture within the past 3 years.		4	
K. Animal movement onto the produce fields should be minimized. <input type="checkbox"/> 23. The produce fields are surrounded by fences and/or buffer zones that minimize animal traffic. <input type="checkbox"/> 24. Animal-drawn farm implements are not used OR animal-drawn farm implements are used but only at least 90 days (non-exposed crops) or 120 days (exposed crops) before harvest.		2	
I. Bird populations in and near the fields should not be excessive. <input type="checkbox"/> 25. Integrated Pest Management is practiced to minimize the number of insects on which birds can feed. <input type="checkbox"/> 26. Steps are taken to prevent nesting and roosting near fields and buildings.		2	
<b>FIELD LOCATION TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 20)</b>			

**IV. PERSONNEL**

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
<p>M. Employees should be properly trained in personal hygiene and prevention of produce contamination.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 27. Employees read hygiene practices and sign a statement indicating that they have read and intend to follow these practices.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 28. Introductory training in hygiene practices is provided and documented for all new employees.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 29. Refresher training in hygiene practices is provided and documented for all continuing employees.</p>		1.33	
<p>N. Employees with illnesses or open wounds should be prohibited from handling produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 30. Written policies explain that the grower will send ill employees home or assign them tasks in which they won't contact produce, and require employees to cover wounds completely with a waterproof covering or be assigned to tasks in which they won't contact produce.</p>		4	
<p>O. Employees should have adequate restroom facilities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 31. Restroom facilities are provided in close proximity to work areas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 32. Restroom facilities include hand-washing stations with sufficient water, soap, and single-use paper towels.</p>		2	
<p>P. Employees should have a separate area for breaks and meals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 33. Break area for food and beverage consumption is separate from produce fields and packing areas.</p>		4	
<b>PERSONNEL TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 16)</b>			

**V. FIELD SANITATION**

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
<p>Q. Harvest containers should be constructed and handled to minimize transfer of disease-causing microbes to produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 34. Harvest containers are made of smooth, cleanable non-absorbent material.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 35. Harvest containers are regularly inspected for damage and discarded if damaged. Inspection results, including discarding damaged containers, are appropriately documented.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 36. Harvest containers are regularly cleaned and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing.</p>		1.33	
<p>R. Farm equipment should be cleaned and sanitized before it is used with fresh produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 37. Farm equipment that is to be used with fresh produce is regularly cleaned and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing.</p>		4	
<b>FIELD SANITATION TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 8)</b>			

**VI. PACKING SHED SANITATION**

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
<p>S. The packing shed should be designed to prevent contamination of produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 38. Product flow in the packing shed is linear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 39. Unwashed and washed produce items are not touched by the same equipment, surfaces, or personnel.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 40. Access to the packing shed is restricted to authorized employees.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 41. The packing shed is constructed to keep pests out.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 42. The maintenance area is separate from the washing / packing area.</p>		.8	
<p>T. Bins and containers in the packaging shed should be maintained, cleaned and sanitized to prevent transfer of disease-causing microbes from the container to the produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 43. Different color bins are used for unwashed and finished produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 44. Bins and containers are regularly inspected and discarded or repaired as necessary, and regularly cleaned and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing.</p>		2	
<p>U. Packing shed personnel should be trained in minimizing microbial contamination of produce.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 45. Employees read hygiene practices and sign a statement indicating that they have read and intend to follow these practices.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 46. Introductory training in hygiene practices is provided and documented for all new employees.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 47. Refresher training in hygiene practices is provided and documented for all continuing employees.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 48. Written policies explain that grower will send ill employees home or assign them tasks in which they won't contact produce, and require employees to cover wounds completely with a waterproof covering or be assigned to tasks in which they won't contact produce.</p>		1	
<p>V. Packing shed equipment should be cleanable, cleaned and sanitized, as appropriate.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 49. The packing line is designed to avoid "dead ends" and is positioned to allow adequate inspection and cleaning.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 50. Equipment is food-grade and maintained so that damaged, pitted, corroded, or cracked equipment is repaired or replaced.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 51. Equipment is regularly cleaned and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing.</p>		1.33	

<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b> <b>SUPPORTING BEST PRACTICES (CHECK EACH THAT IS USED)</b>	<b>A.</b> <b>NO. OF</b> <b>CHECK</b> <b>MARKS</b>	<b>B.</b> <b>POINTS</b>	<b>C.</b> <b>SUB</b> <b>TOTAL</b> <b>(A X B)</b>
W. Packaging materials should be stored so that they do not become a source of contamination. <input type="checkbox"/> 52. Packaging materials are stored in a separate, dry area where they will not become contaminated.		4	
X. Coolers should be kept clean and dry and operated at a cold enough temperature to minimize microbial growth without harming produce quality. <input type="checkbox"/> 53. Coolers are maintained at 45°F or colder. <input type="checkbox"/> 54. Cooler temperature is regularly monitored and recorded. <input type="checkbox"/> 55. Coolers are regularly emptied, cleaned (including cooling unit coils and fan housings), and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing activities. <input type="checkbox"/> 56. Cooler floors are kept dry.		1	
Y. Trucks should be maintained so they don't contaminate produce that is transported in them. <input type="checkbox"/> 57. Trucks are not used to back-haul animals, raw meat, fish, or poultry; or non-food-grade items. <input type="checkbox"/> 58. The interior of each truck is regularly cleaned and sanitized, with appropriate documentation of cleaning and sanitizing.		2	
<b>PACKING SHED SANITATION TOTALS (ADD COLUMN C. TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS = 28)</b>			