

## Food Safety Plan Template for the MDA GAPs Audit

Please read the following before starting your plan:

You can use this SAMPLE plan as a basis for your farm's food safety plan. As you go through and fill this in, remember:

- This is an educational plan! **Delete and adapt** any phrases that are not true to **your** farming practices.
- The italicized phrases are our suggestions for completing the blanks. You can use them, or you can decide to delete and fill in with your own thoughts.
- The statements in bold indicate required documentation.
- Please delete the blanks and italicized phrases as you see fit to make your plan cohesive.

In addition to this food safety plan, **you will need to include proper documentation.**

**Maps are not required by the MDA GAP audit, but may be a helpful tool for both you and the auditor.**

Include a map of your farm (printed from Google Maps or obtained from your county extension office). The purpose of this map is to lay out the farm and facilities in a visual way for the auditor. On the map, label all:

- Bathrooms and hand washing facilities
- Water sources: Wells, surface water sources (used or not)
- Water distribution system, storage tanks, pipes, valves and hydrants
- Chemical storage
- Packing house and permanent buildings related to production
- Refrigerated storage
- Anything else of importance (house, septic field, propane and/or oil tank, etc.)

This is a food safety and security plan which incorporates Good Agricultural Practices and has been accepted and adopted by this farming operation.

Farm name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm address: \_\_\_\_\_

Satellite locations: \_\_\_\_\_

Date written and updates: \_\_\_\_\_

This food safety program is for the following produce (*list all crops you wish to be covered by your food safety plan*):

There is a designated coordinator for implementation and oversight of this farm's food safety program.

Coordinator name: \_\_\_\_\_

This food safety program is supplied to all staff and is available to all visitors. Food safety is very important to this farming operation. This food safety policy is part of the effort of this farming operation to produce a healthy and safe product.

## About Our Farm

*You can use this area to write a bit about your farm: the history, mission, philosophy, etc. You don't need this for the MDA GAP audit, but having this description can be nice for anybody else who might look at your plan e.g., a potential buyer, a visitor, a loan officer, etc.*

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## Farm and Field Section

### **Workers: Hygiene, Safety, and Illness**

Staff receive training on proper sanitation and hygiene practices through watching the Cornell “Health and Hygiene on the Farm” video. All workers are trained on proper hand washing.

Workers are instructed (and expected) to wash hands before starting work, after each absence work (such as after the bathroom), and when hands become soiled or contaminated. **After watching the video, all staff members sign a sheet confirming that they have been trained.**

**The log is attached.**

Workers with duties related to food safety are trained to perform those duties. **A log of these specific trainings is located in the food safety binder.**

This farm provides at least \_\_\_\_\_ (number) toilets and \_\_\_\_\_ (number) hand washing facilities for employees (*there should be 1 per 20 employees*). It is/They are located \_\_\_\_\_ (*Where is your bathroom located?*). **The location can be found on the farm map.** Lavatories have potable water for handwashing, hand soap, single use towels, and trash receptacles. These facilities are clean, well-maintained, and have proper signage instructing employees to wash their hands before beginning or returning to work (*the yellow Cornell signs can be used for this*). These facilities are serviced and cleaned on a regular basis, weekly or more often as needed. All septic systems are in working order. All employees and visitors to the

farm are required to follow proper sanitation and hygiene practices. *Optional:* [If field sanitation units are required, the number and placement of units will comply with applicable state and federal regulations. *(Per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), field sanitation units are required if bathrooms are greater than ¼ mile or a five-minute drive from the area that workers are working, or if you have greater than 20 workers per bathroom).* Field sanitation units will have the same supplies as permanent toilet facilities. These field sanitation units will be cleaned and serviced on a \_\_\_\_\_ *(How often?)* basis (or more frequently if needed), and are located \_\_\_\_\_ *(Where? On the periphery of the field? They shouldn't be in the production field. An example distance would be having porta-potties placed at least 30 feet from fields),* which minimizes the potential risk for produce contamination. **Field sanitation units are accessible for servicing, and service records are in this binder.** Should a toilet or field sanitation unit leak or spill, workers will cease operation immediately. Any affected produce will be disposed of by

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*(How will leaks be handled? How will produce be disposed of?).* All effort will be made to ensure the contaminated produce does not enter the food chain. Workers are instructed and expected to report such leaks and spills to their supervisors.

Using tobacco, chewing gum, drinking, and eating are done in designated areas, separate from where food is grown and handled. Any drinking water near production areas is kept in closed containers in spray rows or outside the field.

Workers are excluded from working if they have diarrhea, fever, or other illness or open lesion (such as a boil, sore, or infected wound), or possible Covid exposure. Workers are instructed and expected to report such health conditions to their supervisors.

Should workers become injured on the job, they must seek first aid help. Injuries include cuts, abrasions, or other injuries. A first aid box is located \_\_\_\_\_ *(inside the shop?)* and is available for staff use. Workers are instructed (and expected) to report injuries to their

supervisor. Should produce or food handling contact surfaces touch blood or bodily fluids, workers will cease operation immediately. The contaminated food contact surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected with water and bleach or hydrogen peroxide. Any affected produce will be disposed of by compost, plowed under or bagged away depending on the type of exposure. All effort will be made to ensure the contaminated produce does not enter the food chain.

Pesticide applicators applying restricted materials must have a pesticide applicator's license or work under the supervision of a licensed applicator. **A copy of the pesticide applicator's license can be found in the food safety binder.**

#### **Water – Irrigation and Pesticide Application**

*In this section, you will describe each of your water sources (ex. Well 1, Pond 2, etc.) and indicate use (ex. Overhead irrigation, drip irrigation, frost protection, pesticide application, dump tank, rinsing harvested produce, washing, etc.). If you use a mitigation step such as UV or a sanitizer, describe. This can be in paragraph form or in a table. Delete or cross out any water use that does not apply to your operation.*

*Water tests for generic E. coli must be completed for each water source. If test results are undesirable, sufficient mitigation steps must be taken. Include copies of water test results in your food safety binder. Irrigation water does not have to be tested for turbidity and nitrates (but water for post-harvest use does). Mitigation steps such as UV filter, allowing time barrier between the application of water and harvesting crop, shocking the well, using chlorine injectors or using a different irrigation method must be documented. Water used post-harvest must be tested for generic E. coli or total coliforms, turbidity and nitrates.*

## Water testing guidelines

### Water testing frequency:

*Surface water source test: 3 times a season (at first use, peak use, harvest).*

*Well water tests: once a season (at first use).*

*Municipal: at least once a season, records obtained from county.*

### Water test results:

*Contact water: Average should be less than 126 CFU/100ml water.*

*One sample is allowed to be 235 CFU/100ml water.*

*Contact water includes irrigation methods where water will touch the edible portion of the crop, such as sprinkler/overhead irrigation, frost protection, drip irrigation for root crops, etc.*

*Noncontact water: Average should be less than 126 CFU/100 ml water.*

*One sample is allowed to be 576 CFU/100ml water.*

*Noncontact water includes irrigation methods where water does not touch the edible portion of the crop, such as drip/furrow irrigation.*

*Post-harvest Water: Water test must indicate potable or safe for drinking.*

**A water quality risk assessment is performed for our water used for irrigation, frost protection, or evaporative cooling, and a record can be found in this food safety binder.**

Irrigation on this farm is done with drip irrigation, overhead irrigation, rinsing harvest, pesticide application, washing. (*What type of water is used for irrigation? You may list several sources*).

Irrigation methods include well water used for sprinklers, drip irrigation, overhead irrigation, pesticide application, washing, rinsing. . *Explain the type of irrigation that you do for each crop (example: tomatoes are drip irrigated with pond water. Sweet corn is irrigated by sprinklers with well water). Think about the risks involved with each type of irrigation. If your water tests high for E. coli, is there any mitigation step or alternative water you can (or do) use?*

*-tomatoes are drip irrigated with well water*

*-peppers are drip irrigated with well water*

- cucumbers are drip irrigated with well water
- garlic are drip irrigated with well water
- summer squash is drip irrigated with well water
- herbs are watered with overhead sprinklers

Evaporative cooling and/or frost protection is used with \_\_\_\_\_ (what crops?) and is done with \_\_\_\_\_ (What type of water is used for evaporative cooling/frost protection?) If your water tests high for *E. coli*, is there any mitigation step or alternative water you can (or do) use?

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Pesticide applications are done with well water. (What type of water is used for pesticide applications? This water should be “microbially safe” (< 1 or 0 CFU generic *E. coli* in a 100 mL water sample) or there is a sufficient interval between pesticide application and harvest to minimize contamination risk –specify the interval in your plan) on \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (which crops?)

We test our water sources \_\_\_\_\_ times a year (wells should be tested at least 1/year at the beginning of the season. Surface water sources including rain barrels should be tested 3/year at the beginning of the season, at peak use, and before harvest). **Results are included in this food safety binder. If water sources do not meet our quality criteria, we take appropriate risk mitigation steps, a record of which is located in this binder.**

Potable water is available to all workers and is verified by testing, according to USDA GAP requirements (must be tested for generic *E. coli* or total coliforms, turbidity and nitrates and meet the standard of undetectable CFU *E. coli*, <10 NTU turbidity and <10 mg/L nitrates in order to be safe for drinking. Use of bottled water is acceptable without testing).

Our farm is located about \_\_\_\_\_ (number) miles from any sewage treatment facilities, waste material landfills, and fowl, feedlot, or livestock production facilities. All reasonable effort is made to keep livestock (mine and others) and wild animals farther than 200

feet from water sources used for irrigation, to minimize potential contamination to the water source. \_\_\_\_\_ (How is that that done? If you don't keep them 200 feet away, change the number – 50ft? 100ft?) Are there any ways that you prevent the contamination of irrigation water? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The land used by this farming operation has not been flooded with potential fecal contamination. *If it is, are there any steps you have taken (or can take) to minimize contamination?* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (let lay fallow a few months, etc).

### **Animals**

The farming operation is such that wild or domestic animal entry into crop production area is infrequent. **Crop production area is monitored for signs of the presence of wild or domestic animals, and the logs are attached in this binder.** Should it become necessary, active measures to deter entry include \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (How do you deter animals in the field? Hunting? Propane cannons? Repellants?). Any repellants would not be placed in the production field. If we see fecal matter in fields, we take steps to reduce contamination. These steps include:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(flagging and not picking within 2 ft or another certain radius?).

Animal production areas on the farm are located \_\_\_\_\_  
(above? Adjacent to? Below? How are away?) from produce production areas. Produce areas are protected from contamination by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.



Manure lagoons are well maintained to prevent leaking or overflowing. Should lagoons be located near or adjacent to crop production areas, adequate measures are in place to ensure that runoff will not contaminate crop production areas. These measures include

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The land used by this farming operation has not been used to dump livestock bodies or other waste. *If it has, how do you prevent contamination?*

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*Length of time, barrier, have land tested for microbes*).

### **Fertilizers**

*Circle any of the following options that you use and delete the options that you do not use on your farm:*

*Option A – Compost Use (Treated biological soil amendments or compost containing animal byproducts or table waste)*

Compost is used on this farm. In order to be considered compost, the product needs to be composted and/or treated with recommended practices. These practices are

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*Where do you get your compost from? Do you make the compost on the farm?*). **If you purchase finished compost, documentation of the vendors' Certificate of Conformance is attached in this binder. If you compost on the farm, documentation of these practices is attached in this binder e.g. turning times and temperature measurements.** (*Example of scientifically valid composting includes: Carbon to Nitrogen ratio of 25:1 – 40:1; Compost reaching temperatures between 131°F -- 170°F for at least 15 days; and turned 5 times during the process.*) Until the composting treatment is finished, the product is stored \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (*compost should be stored in a place where there is low risk of*

contamination). Measures are taken to prevent contamination of production areas with unfinished compost. These measures include

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*Option B – Synthetic fertilizers/minerals/lime are used. (No restrictions.)*

*Option C – Green manure or compost that does not contain animal byproducts (No restrictions)*

*Option D – Manure that has received an approved heat treatment is used. (Agri pellets, etc. that have been heated sufficiently during production to reduce pathogens).*

*Option E - Raw manure use (includes piled or aged manure, and other un-treated amendments of animal origin, including un-composted table waste) (Use restrictions apply.)*

Manure is used on this farm \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (where -- produce crops? Field crops?). Manure is

incorporated at least 2 weeks prior to planting, and a minimum of 120 days prior to harvest for high-risk crops or 90 days for low-risk crops e.g., sweet corn. **All rates, dates, and locations of raw manure applications are documented, and included in this binder.** No side-dressing of manure is allowed. Manure (or biosolids) are stored on this farm before use. Manure is stored

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(where do you store manure?). Manure should be stored with a barrier or some sort of containment system, so that contamination to crop production areas does not occur. If manure is stored near crop production areas, contamination is prevented by \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ (How is contamination of crops and equipment prevented, as well as rodent contamination avoided?).

*Option F - No manure/compost use*

Raw manure or compost is not used as a soil amendment on this farm.

**Field Harvesting and Transportation**

*In an opening paragraph, briefly describe the land use history of your farm. If the land has been in agriculture for over three years, state that. If not, explain what it has been used for. Assess and explain any potential land use risks and how they have been mitigated.*

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All tables, baskets, totes, hand harvesting implements (clippers) \_\_\_\_\_  
(*What else do you use for picking?*) are cleaned and/or sanitized prior to use. Sanitation and cleaning is done by \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*How do you sanitize your supplies? Chlorine water rinse, air spray, etc.? How often? All tools, harvesting containers, vehicles, etc. that have direct contact with crops should be cleaned, sanitized, and dried on a scheduled basis or should be single use.*) Example: Sanitation and cleaning is done on a scheduled basis or when noticeable dirt/debris is observed. Workers are instructed (and expected) that harvesting containers, totes, etc. are not used for carrying or storing non-produce items. Damaged or soiled containers will be properly repaired or disposed of. No hazardous material containers will come into contact with produce. Heavily soiled containers will be cleaned \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ (*how will you clean heavily soiled containers?*)

Produce containers are stored \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (*where do you store your containers?*), under cover so that they are protected from contamination.

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\_\_\_\_\_ (When, How?). Harvesting equipment and/or machinery that come into contact with produce will be kept as clean as practical and will be in good repair. *Optional: The harvested product will be covered when moved from field to storage areas and/or processing plants.*

If glass breaks on harvesting equipment, workers will stop immediately. Affected produce will be disposed of \_\_\_\_\_ (How?). Effort will be made to ensure that contaminated produce does not enter the food chain. Workers are instructed to report breakage to their supervisors.

Contamination by chemical, petroleum, pesticide, or other contaminants is a serious matter. If contamination occurs, workers should stop immediately. Any affected produce will be disposed of \_\_\_\_\_ (How do you clean up the produce and the area?). Workers are instructed and expected to report such contamination to their supervisors.

The crew will regularly inspect the harvested produce. Any foreign object (glass, metal, rock or other matter) will be removed. Workers are told to report contamination to their supervisors. *If crops are mechanically harvested, the crop is inspected at least once for foreign items.*

As much dirt and mud (as is practical) are removed from the produce outside the packing facility. \_\_\_\_\_ (How is this done?).

Trucks and any other equipment hauling produce are to be washed prior to being used (and loaded with produce) and are kept clean while in use. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (How do you keep trucks clean? Washing them out? Sweeping?).

**Post-Harvest**

*Briefly describe your packing operation. Are you field packing or using a packing house? Both? For which crops? Are any of your crops washed? This information can be presented in a paragraph, list, or table.*

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Surfaces that contact water or the crop during packing, storage, and transport (packing lines, dump tanks, flumes, coolers, trucks, etc.) are cleaned and sanitized \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ *What sanitizer do you*

*use? What concentration? How often?* Packing lines, trucks, etc. are dried after cleaning and sanitizing prior to contact with produce. **A log of cleaning dates is kept in this food safety binder.**

All non-food grade chemicals and lubricants will be stored away from the packing area. On the farm, chemicals are stored \_\_\_\_\_. The packing area should be neat, clean, and enclosed as much as possible. The packing facility grounds should be free of litter, debris, and standing water. All glass over the product flow zone should be non-breakable or covered.

**Post-Harvest Water**

*(Any water and ice used post-harvest or for storage is potable/safe for drinking. If dump tanks or flumes are used, or water is reused, the water needs to be treated to reduce microbial cross-contamination. This may include treating with bleach at a rate of 50-200ppm (Organic production requires the discharge water to contain no more than 4ppm chlorine). Any sanitizers used must be labeled for contact with fruits and vegetables and the labeled instructions must be*

*followed. The concentration of the sanitizer must be monitored and recorded as well as any other variables required by the labeled instructions. For example, chlorine-based sanitizers require monitoring the pH and temperature of the water to ensure maximum effectiveness of the sanitizer. The addition of sanitizers post-harvest creates waste water and the disposal of the waste water may be regulated by MDE.*

All processing water to manufacture ice, and in wash lines, dump tanks, flumes, and product contact surfaces is potable, as determined by water tests from the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Water source?). **Test results are included in this binder.** Circle any of the following options that you use for post-harvest water and strike or delete the options that you do not use on your farm:

*Option A: Dry pack, meaning no post-harvest fruit or vegetable washing is done on this farm.*

The following crops are packed dry with no washing, flumes, or hydrocooling performed

\_\_\_\_\_.

*Option B: single pass water is used for fruit and vegetable washing on this farm.*

Single pass water is used for the following crops \_\_\_\_\_.

Single pass washing is performed by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

*Option C: Recirculated water is used for fruit and vegetable washing on this farm (treatment and monitoring of treatment required to reduce risk of cross contamination).*

To prevent contamination between produce, reused water in [1] dump tanks and /or [2] flumes and/or [3] produce wash bins are treated and monitored for (choose all that apply:

temperature, sanitizer concentration, pH) via the following procedure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. **Water monitoring logs are included in this binder.**

**Packinghouse Facility**

Any produce that comes in contact with the floor will be disposed of. Manufacturing equipment and containers and all processing lines are cleaned and sanitized on a \_\_\_\_\_  
(daily, weekly, never) basis and documented. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (How do you sanitize the equipment? Power washing and chlorine solution?) **Documentation is included in this binder.**

The packing and storage facilities are maintained so that loose insulation and other materials are not protruding from the walls, and cracks are filled in as possible. The facility is well maintained and kept free of debris and soil, when possible. Mechanical equipment used in storage is cleaned and maintained. The storage area is inspected \_\_\_\_\_ (How often?), and any foreign materials are removed before loading with produce. Non-food grade substances are not to be stored in close proximity to the produce.

Any product flow zones, or areas where produce is handled or stored, are protected from contamination. Glass materials are contained or made of shatterproof glass. *This includes lights, etc.*

Employees on break use designated lunch/break areas located \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Where do your employees eat/smoke/drink during breaks?) No consumption of beverages or food and no tobacco use occurs in production areas. All employees shall follow written guidelines regarding wearing jewelry and hair/beard nets. \_\_\_\_\_ (What is your jewelry policy? Do you require hair/beard nets?)

Only food-grade lubricants are used on food contact surfaces, equipment and the processing line.

No domestic or wild animals are allowed in the packing area. Proactive measures are taken to exclude pests or animals from packing and storage facilities. Pest exclusion methods include

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*(How do you exclude pests? Measures may include bird tape, screens, traps, etc.).* The storage facilities are sufficiently sealed or isolated so they are protected from external contamination, such as wandering animals. Dogs, cats, or other domestic animals are not permitted inside the packing and storage facilities. A pest control log is maintained that indicates pest sightings, trap inspection dates and catches. *How often do you check the pest traps?*

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**The pest control log is available in this binder.** Only traps or nonpoisonous baits are allowed inside the facilities, if they are needed. Any area where bait or traps are set out or areas routinely affected will be frequently monitored.

### **Containers, pallets, storage, and transport**

Pallets, pallet boxes, totes, bags, bins, storage rooms, packing containers, and \_\_\_\_\_ are kept clean, stored properly and protected from contamination by birds, rodents, pests, soil, water, and other contaminants (where appropriate). \_\_\_\_\_

*(How do you clean your harvesting containers, etc.? how often?).* Dirty containers will not be used and broken pallets will be repaired.

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\_\_\_\_\_ *(Once produce is harvested how do you treat it? Where is it taken? Ex: The harvested product is not expected to be stored out of doors in totes, trucks, bins, or other containers, or in bulk on the ground).* Should the harvested product be stored out of doors, it will be covered to protect it from contamination.

Any equipment used for hauling the produce is kept in good condition (such as being clean and odor-free). Trailers and equipment are inspected before produce is loaded. Fertilizers, pesticides, meat, poultry, fish and other products are not mixed in with produce handling and



transport. When produce is loaded into the trailer, damage and contamination are minimized. If load shifting is an issue, care is taken to prevent it.

If ice or cold water is used for cooling the produce, the water source must be potable and the ice/cold water is manufactured, transported, and stored under sanitary conditions. The ice production and storage facilities are regularly cleaned and sanitized by

\_\_\_\_\_ (How?). Sanitary conditions are maintained in all areas where ice is manufactured, transported, or stored.

\_\_\_\_\_ (If ice is not used on your farm, where do you cool produce? Refrigerated facilities, not refrigerated until sold at markets?)

If refrigeration systems are used to store produce, the temperature should be maintained at the recommended temperature, \_\_\_\_\_ (What temperature?). **This temperature is checked regularly and recorded in a log, which is attached to this binder.** The thermometer used to take the temperature is checked for accuracy \_\_\_\_\_ (How often?).

Cold storage units are cleaned and maintained on a scheduled basis, and produce is stored in manner to reduce the risk of contamination through condenser drip or other source.

\*This sample plan was adapted from a NY extension doc.