



Frequently Asked Food Safety Questions

Are foods from a local farm, community garden, greenhouse any less safe to eat than foods from a grocery store?

No. However, it should be recognized that whole produce, like any other food product, is subject to contamination. Following good practices to ensure the produce is protected at all stages – from the growing conditions, through to harvesting, trimming, storage and shipping – can help ensure the produce remains safe to eat.

Can schools utilize fresh fruits and vegetables delivered directly from the farm, a community garden, a community greenhouse?

Yes. The produce would need to be in good condition. See “Does the farmer need to have a Permit to supply produce?”

Can I use meat, dairy or egg products from my local farmer?

Yes, if that farmer’s products are processed through an approved facility. More information on approved facilities is available through your local Health Protection office.

Does the farmer need to have a Permit to supply produce?

No. However, it should be recognized that produce, like any other food product, is subject to contamination. There are many examples of contaminated produce causing food poisoning. To help lessen the risk, the farmer will need to ensure the products supplied

- do not contain any poisonous or harmful substance;
- are fit for human consumption;
- do not have any filthy, rotten, decomposed or similar components
- is not adulterated; and
- is manufactured, prepared, preserved, packaged or stored under sanitary conditions.

Other specific considerations include the water supply used for irrigation and produce washing. It should be of potable quality (i.e. safe to drink). The farmer should also ensure the produce is protected during transport (e.g. use of clean shipping containers) and is temperature controlled, if required.

In addition to the farmer’s responsibilities, the kitchen facility operator has an obligation to ensure any food used in the facility is not contaminated and is fit for human consumption.

Is there fee for the Permit to Operate?

No. As many of the recipients of the food in this program may be low income, it has been deemed equivalent to a charitable function. As such, the applicant can apply to the Health Authority for a waiver of the fees for the Permit to Operate.

PHABC acknowledges and appreciates the collaborative effort of partners within the interior and northern health authorities who lead the development of this resource.

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