



FARM SAFETY

What to Expect of a Regulatory Inspection

The Georgia Department of Agriculture (GDA) may conduct an inspection of your farm for a routine or follow-up inspection. Inspections are an integral part of the GDA's commitment to produce safety, we also seek to provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to farmers and producers around the state.

This document provides the farm owner and or produce safety manager with an overview of the steps that state or federal inspectors may take during a routine Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR) inspection, and should address any questions the you may have. If there are additional questions after reading this document, please contact the Farm Safety Program at 229-386-3488.

Scheduling the Inspection

Typically, a GDA inspector will contact the farm owner or produce safety manager to schedule an inspection. The designated owner or manager will serve as the main point of contact and should work with inspectors to schedule and complete the inspection.

Pre-Inspection Call

During a pre-inspection call, the inspector will ask questions to make a preliminary determination about whether the [PSR](#) applies to your farm.

- Please use the FDA decision tree entitled found at [here](#) to assist in this discussion.

During the call, the inspector will discuss:

- Whether the farm grows covered produce (produce regulated by the rule);
- If the farm conducts covered activities (growing, harvesting, packing or holding);
- Farm size (produce sales and/or food sales), to determine if the farm is not subject to the rule or meets the requirements for a qualified exemption;
- Whether the farm meets the requirements for the processing exemption.

If the farm is determined to be exempt or qualified exempt, the inspector may perform an inspection to review records that support this status. Please see records required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule, [here](#).

Announced Inspections

- If the produce grown on the farm is covered by the rule, the inspector will schedule an inspection date that works for both the inspector and the person in charge. In most cases the inspection will be scheduled within five (5) business days of contact with the person in charge. If the person in charge is not the produce safety/quality expert, the inspector may suggest that individual also be present for the inspection. Plan to have a representative from the farm knowledgeable in the growing, harvesting, packing and holding activities, preferably the person responsible for produce safety, escort the inspection team around your farm. The inspector will explain the general flow of the inspection, what the inspection will cover and records that may be reviewed.
- The inspector will ask if your farm has any biosecurity practices, hazards, safety protocols, and other requirements that inspectors need to be aware of and adhere to prior to visiting.

Unannounced Inspections

Most inspections will be announced but there are circumstances in which unannounced inspections may be conducted. The following are examples of when an unannounced inspection may occur:

- 1) If the farm is unresponsive (no contact within five (5) business days after reasonable contact attempts have been made) or unwillingness to set a date for the inspection;
- 2) If the farm has had produce safety issues in the past and the issue has not been corrected;
- 3) If a follow-up inspection is needed and an unannounced inspection may work best to observe the necessary changes being made; or
- 4) In response to a complaint, recall, or foodborne outbreak investigation.

Day of an Inspection

When an inspector arrives on your farm, the inspector will ask to speak to the owner or person in charge. The inspector will introduce themselves (name, title, agency), reason for the visit and are required to provide identification. Contingent upon State regulations or if FDA conducts the inspection, the inspector may also issue a written Notice of Inspection or similar form to you. It is preferred that the owner, person in charge, or produce safety manager is onsite for the inspection. A person knowledgeable in growing, harvesting, packing and holding activities, preferably the person responsible for produce safety, should plan to accompany the inspectors during the inspection.

Initial Interview

The inspector will provide you with a brief description of the reason for and scope of the inspection and activities to be conducted during the inspection. The amount of time an inspection will take depends on the type of inspection, farm activities, size of the farm, and what is observed during the inspection. The inspector will ask you about the activities performed the day(s) of the inspection, such as whether the farm is planting, harvesting, packing or holding and about the farm's organization.

Walk-Through of the Farm

During the inspection, the inspector will observe farm operation, working with the owner to coordinate inspection activities with farm operations. It is helpful for the person in charge or produce safety manager to accompany the inspector during the inspection. An inspector may ask questions about farming practices and operations that they are not able to observe during the inspection. Inspectors will take notes, and may take pictures, collect samples, and will review and may copy records, such as training and biological soil amendment records.

Throughout the inspection, the inspector will explain what is being looked at and why. If there are any regulatory concerns, the inspector will discuss them with the person in charge and explain the reason(s) for each regulatory concern and the public health significance.

Exit Interview

It is preferred that the farm owner or manager, is available during the exit interview. The inspector will go over any regulatory concerns and findings and provide the person in charge with information on resources and technical assistance. If the person in charge is able to make corrections during the inspection, the inspector will document the corrections that are implemented. If the deficiency cannot be corrected during the inspection, the inspector will work with the owner or manager to determine a reasonable time frame to implement preventive measures and corrective actions. During the exit interview, the inspector will also identify preventive produce safety practices and conditions on your farm that align with the requirements of the PSR. The inspector will also answer any questions regarding the inspection. He or she will also provide the owner or manager with an inspection sheet with agency contact information that will document the inspection.