

Managing farm manures for food safety

Guidance for growers of ready-to-eat crops. The guidance explains how to manage farm manures by developing safety plans that will reduce the risks of microbiological contamination of ready-to-eat crops.

Farm manures that are applied to agricultural land to meet crop nutrient requirements and improve soil fertility can contain pathogenic micro-organisms responsible for causing foodborne illness.

These micro-organisms include:

- [E. coli O157](#)
- [salmonella](#)
- [listeria](#)
- [campylobacter](#)

Storage and use of farm manures must therefore be managed to reduce the risks of contaminating crops. This is particularly important for ready-to-eat fruit and vegetables that will be eaten raw.

The guidance on Managing Farm Manures for Food Safety aims to provide UK growers with practical advice on how to reduce the risk of contamination of ready-to-eat crops when using farm manures to improve soil fertility.

In summary, the main aspects of the guidance are:

- the selection of land on which ready-to-eat crops are grown
- management of manures and slurries before application to land
- timing of applications of manure (including fresh manure from grazing animals) and slurry, in relation to production of ready-to-eat crops
- prevention of contamination of growing crops and reduction of risks during and after harvest

The guidance provides advice on good practice to help growers in the UK develop safety plans. It takes account of FSA-funded research on the presence of pathogens in UK farm manures and their decline during storage, following application to land and direct defecation by animals on land. It complements established guidance from agriculture departments on Good Agricultural Practices.

This guidance does not prescribe specific mandatory requirements and following the guidance is on a voluntary basis. We are aware that many UK growers already manage farm manures in a way that is consistent with this guidance and some operate to commercial specifications that exceed the advice provided.

PDF

[View Guidelines for growers to reduce the risks of microbiological contamination of ready-to-eat crops. as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (82.58 KB)

Important

References to EU legislation in FSA guidance

Directly applicable EU legislation no longer applies in GB. EU legislation retained when the UK exited the EU became assimilated law on 1 January 2024, published on legislation.gov.uk. References to any legislation in FSA guidance with 'EU' or 'EC' in the title (e.g. Regulation (EC) 178/2002) should now be regarded as assimilated law where applicable to GB. References to 'Retained EU Law' or 'REUL' should now be regarded as references to assimilated law.

For businesses moving goods from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, information on [the Windsor Framework](#) is available on GOV.UK.

The Windsor Framework was adopted by the UK and EU on 24 March 2023. The Framework provides a unique set of arrangements to support the flow of agrifood retail products from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), allowing GB standards for public health in relation to food, marketing and organics to apply for pre-packed retail goods moved via the NI Retail Movement Scheme (NIRMS).