

FOOD SAFETY



State departments of agriculture are the front line of protection for consumers when it comes to food safety. State agencies, including state departments of agriculture, play a vital role in implementing and enforcing our nation's system of food safety and inspection laws.

BACKGROUND

FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT IMPLEMENTATION

In 2011, the Food Safety and Modernization Act was signed into law and fundamentally began the process of transforming our country's food safety system from reactive (recalls and trace back) to preventive (education and evaluation). State departments of agriculture and other state agencies are charged with implementing significant portions of FSMA, notably:

- Produce Safety Rule (including special provisions for sprout production)
- Preventive Controls for Human Food
- Preventive Controls for Animal Food

Currently, 46 states and one territory have entered into cooperative agreements with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to educate and/or regulate farms subject to the rule based on a framework NASDA developed through its agreement with FDA. A joint NASDA-FDA Implementation Group adds appendices to help guide states in program best practices. A similar framework for animal food safety is available.

As part of NASDA's guiding principle towards farms' FSMA compliance, "educate before you regulate," a team comprised of NASDA, state, FDA and cooperative extension food safety leaders developed the On Farm Readiness Review program. Designed to move farmers away from the audit checklist scheme, the OFRR is meant to foster a dialogue between the farmer and the regulator and/or educator about the requirements of the Produce Safety Rule. Learn more and find out how to sign-up for an OFRR at nasda.org/nasda-foundation/ofrr.

NEW ERA FOR FOOD SAFETY

In 2020, the FDA rolled out a new food safety blueprint, New Era for Food Safety, that leverages technology and other tools to create a safer and more digital, traceable food system.



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REGULATORY ACTION

AGRICULTURAL WATER RULE

In 2021, FDA released its agricultural water proposed rule which establishes standards for water usage in the production of produce. This rule replaces some of existing requirements for agricultural water in the Produce Safety Rule.

NASDA POLICY

To support FDA's statutory authority, state agencies are primarily responsible for the actual inspections, enforcement, training and implementation of a wide range of other food safety regulatory activities. For example, FDA contracts with states to monitor medicated animal feeds and to investigate incidents of pesticide or drug residues in foods. Approximately 80 percent of food safety inspections in the United States are completed at the state and local level.

NASDA'S ASKS

NASDA supports increased funding for the following FSMA programs:

- Produce Safety Rule Implementation, State Cooperative Agreement Program
- Animal Food Preventive Controls Rule Implementation, State Cooperative Agreement Program
- Food Safety Outreach Program
- Produce Safety Alliance

NASDA recommends the FDA implement the following as it works towards using technology to assist traceability:

- Create consistent data collection metrics that can be implemented from farms to store shelves.
- Work across government agencies (federal and state) to understand how to effectively collect data.
- Use digital technologies to expedite outbreak-related communications.
- Communicate more frequently with stakeholders.
- Create a central database for all food safety inspection data.

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