

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.

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

IMPORTANT

EU references in FSA guidance documents

The FSA is updating all EU references, to accurately reflect the law now in force, in all new or amended guidance published since the Transition Period ended at the end of 2020. In some circumstance it may not always be practicable for us to have all EU references updated at the point we publish new or amended guidance.

Other than in Northern Ireland, any references to EU Regulations in this guidance should be read as meaning retained EU law. You can access retained EU law via HM Government's [EU Exit Web Archive](#). This should be read alongside any EU Exit legislation that was made to ensure retained EU law operates correctly in a UK context. EU Exit legislation is on [legislation.gov.uk](#). In Northern Ireland, EU law will continue to apply in respect to the majority of food and feed hygiene and safety law, as listed in the [Northern Ireland Protocol](#), and retained EU law will not apply to Northern Ireland in these circumstances.