

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 Authority Environmental Health or 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
- are not adulterated; and
- are 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.

Do I have to get my plans approved by the Health Authority?

If the salad bar is part of a food service that is offered to the public, then approvals are required. If the food will only be offered to students and staff, then no approval is required but good design and operational practices should be followed.

Is there fee for the Permit to Operate?

If the salad bar is operated as part of the cafeteria that is open to the public, a fee may apply. Check with your local Health Authority for further details and to see if a waiver of the permit fees may apply.

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