10 FARMING TIPS PRODUCE SAFETY

- **Knowing the safety procedures of the Food Safety Modernization Act** (FSMA) can help you avoid spreading food-borne illness through produce.
- **Harvest your crops at the right time** and store them correctly to optimize their shelf life and value.
- Following good produce safety measures is especially important for crops that are **intended to be eaten raw**, such as lettuce.
- **Know where your water comes from.** Agricultural water that contacts produce can transmit pathogens, and must be safe for consumption.
- **Wildlife and livestock can spread diseases to your crops**. Limit animal access to fields and crops where possible.
- **Don't pick if you're sick.** Ensure you and your workers are well enough to harvest, and have access to clean facilities.
- **Dropped produce** introduces it to sources of disease. Produce that is eaten fresh should be thrown away if it falls on the ground.
- A **food safety plan** and **good recordkeeping** help you track your produce from the field to its destination, in case of contamination.
- **You can't sanitize a dirty surface!** Both clean (remove dirt) and sanitize (treat to destroy microbes) harvest equipment and surfaces as needed.
- **Consider preserving your harvest to reduce food waste.** Use USDA-approved recipes and food preservation methods backed by science.

Learn more about FSMA and get training at nmdeptag.nmsu.edu/aps/fsma-produce-safety.html, and the Produce Safety Alliance (Cornell Univ.) at https://cals.cornell.edu/produce-safety-alliance. Learn more about safe food preservation from the National Center for Home Food Preservation (Univ. of GA) at https://nchfp.uga.edu/. Flyer produced by Bethany Abrahamson, NMSU Cooperative Extension. New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. October 2026.