

## Using School Garden/Greenhouse Produce Falmouth Schools Food Service

United States Department of Agriculture (“USDA”), which administers the NSLP, has stated that schools can serve school garden produce as part of reimbursable school lunch programs, provided that school cafeterias comply with any state or local health and sanitation requirements. Accordingly, from a legal standpoint, there are no federal impediments to using school garden produce in school lunch meals. On the contrary, current federal policy encourages such programs.

It is important to ensure that safe growing principles are used to grow produce from any source, including gardens. Before using any produce from a school garden, visit the garden and ask the master gardener about growing practices, including the history of the land use, water sources, soil sampling and results, use of fertilizers and pesticides, and animal control measures.

School-grown produce is treated with the same care as produce from other sources.

**PURPOSE:** To prevent or reduce risk of foodborne illness or injury by contaminated fruits and vegetables received from Falmouth Schools gardens and greenhouses.

**SCOPE:** This procedure applies to foodservice employees who prepare or serve food, and students and staff working in school gardens/greenhouses.

**KEY WORDS:** Fruits, Vegetables, Cross-Contamination, Washing

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Train foodservice employees and garden staff on using the procedures in this SOP.
2. Follow State or local health department requirements. Maine Food Code 2013; 2009 FDA Food Code
3. Wash hands using the proper procedure. Wash hands before and after picking produce. Use clean (vinyl or plastic) gloves (that have not been used to stir compost or pull weeds) or clean hands when picking produce.
4. Wash, rinse, sanitize, and air-dry all food-contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils that will be in contact with produce, such as cutting boards, knives, and sinks. (SOP #1) Use clean containers for harvesting produce that are made from materials designed specifically to safely hold food. Examples include paper grocery bags, 5-gallon food-grade buckets (that held pickles or other food products), colanders or plastic kitchen bowls. Plastic garbage bags, trash cans, and any containers that originally held chemicals such as household cleaners or pesticides are not food-grade.
5. Brush, shake or rub off any excess garden soil or debris before putting the produce into the harvest container or bringing produce into the kitchen.
6. Wash all raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly before combining with other ingredients, including:
  - Unpeeled fresh fruit and vegetables that are served whole or cut into pieces.

# HACCP-Based SOPs

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- Fruits and vegetables that are peeled and cut to use in cooking or served ready-to-eat.
7. Wash fresh produce vigorously under cold running water. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled as being previously washed and ready-to-eat are not required to be washed.
  8. Scrub the surface of firm fruits or vegetables such as apples or potatoes using a clean and sanitized brush designated for this purpose.
  9. Remove any damaged or bruised areas.
  10. Label, date, and refrigerate fresh-cut items.
  11. Serve cut melons within 7 days if held at 41 °F or below. Refer to the Date Marking Ready-to-Eat, Potentially Hazardous Food SOP.
  12. Do not serve raw seed sprouts.

## **MONITORING:**

1. The foodservice manager will visually monitor that fruits and vegetables are being properly received, washed, labeled, and dated during all hours of operation.
2. Foodservice employees will check daily the quality of fruits and vegetables in cold storage.

## **CORRECTIVE ACTION:**

1. Retrain any foodservice employee and garden staff found not following the procedures in this SOP.
2. Remove unwashed fruits and vegetables and wash immediately before being served.
3. Label and date fresh cut fruits and vegetables.
4. Discard cut melons held after 7 days.

## **VERIFICATION AND RECORD KEEPING:**

The foodservice manager will complete the Food Safety Checklist daily to indicate that monitoring is being conducted as specified in this SOP. The Food Safety Checklist is to be kept on file for a minimum of 1 year.

**DATE IMPLEMENTED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE REVIEWED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE REVISED:** June 10, 2016 \_\_\_\_\_ **BY:** M.Poliquin & Managers

**DATE REVISED:** September 30, 2019 **BY:** M. Poliquin

