

Sample SOP: Land Use Risk Assessment

Revision: 3.0

Date: 7/2/2014

1—Purpose

Describes how to assess previous and nearby land use for risks to make sure that they are not a source of contamination to fresh fruit and vegetables.

2—Scope

Applies to people involved in deciding where crops are to be planted or those responsible for assessing produce fields prior to planting.

3—Responsibility

Prior to planting, farm owners/managers should evaluate previous and nearby land uses for possible sources of contamination and document the assessment. When necessary, actions should be taken to correct or reduce contamination risks that are identified to prevent contamination of the produce crop.

4—Materials

- *Land Use Risk Assessment Log*
- Pen or pencil

5—Procedure

To be completed before planting produce fields, reviewed, and updated annually or as relevant changes in commodities, farming practices, land use, or environmental conditions occur.

- Review and assess field risks including previous and adjacent land uses.
- Check sewage treatment or septic systems on site (if present) to make sure they are properly maintained to prevent contamination to fields and water sources.
- Review condition and location of sanitation units in the field to make sure they are properly located and have not leaked or spilled.
- Assess wildlife activity by reviewing the *Wildlife and Domestic Animal Activity logs*. Determine whether actions need to be taken to minimize animal activity in produce fields.
- Gather information related to application of chemicals to land or near your fields that may pose a food safety hazard.
- Review your water sources including wells, open water sources, and municipal systems to ensure there are no potential sources of contamination nearby.
- Assess impact from nearby land. Be sure to evaluate animal operations that are nearby your land, talk with neighbors about their current land uses, and gather information about previous land uses.
- Choose fields for production based on where there is the least likelihood of contamination. (This could mean not planting in a field or planting a lower risk crop in a field of concern.)

- Record any risks in the *Land Use Risk Assessment Log*.
- If you identify any risks, make the necessary changes to correct or reduce the risks. Depending on the risk, this might include actions such as testing the water or soil for chemical and biological contaminants, creating buffer zones, building berms to contain manure/compost, or constructing fences to keep domestic animals away from produce growing areas or water sources.

Record all corrective actions taken in the *Land Use Risk Assessment Log*.

Keep records [*enter location here*] and review before planting each season.