

Severe Weather Events



Severe weather events can be expected from time to time. Those events can potentially cause product contamination.



Floods, dust storms and droughts



Establish windbreaks where you can

Floods, dust storms, and droughts increase the risk of fresh produce contamination.

If necessary, establish windbreaks to reduce wind speed and decrease the impact of dust storms.

Droughts often reduce the quality and safety of water sources. During drought events, increase the frequency of water and product testing as determined by risk.

Severe flooding when runoff from rivers or streams runs onto the fields will result in produce contamination.

Contaminated flood water

Floodwaters can carry chemicals, dangerous microbes (pathogens), and any number of physical contaminants (e.g. plastic, glass, metal, wood).

Floodwaters often carry contamination from sewage and septic systems, manure storage, industrial chemical storage, pesticide or fertiliser storage, and more.

If flooding occurs, as soon as it is safe, place markers at the high-water line so you can identify the areas where crops were in contact with flood waters.

Place a second set of markers well away from the high-water line to create a buffer zone. That buffer zone should be sufficient to allow equipment to turn around without touching the flooded area.



Floodwaters spread contamination



Contaminated produce



Discard produce touched by flood waters

Thoroughly clean protective clothing (e.g. rubber boots, rubber gloves) and all equipment before work begins again in the clean areas of the farm.

Produce touched by floodwater and in the buffer zone can be contaminated. Seek advice from the Fresh Produce Safety Centre (www.fpsc-anz.com) before harvesting this produce.

Over time, contamination of the flooded site will naturally decrease.

Ask your local agronomist to organise soil tests to check the level of contamination still present in the flooded fields before replanting.

Wait at least 60 days before replanting. The soil must be sufficiently dried out.